"The Black Bloodhound" Pirate Novel by Farnham Bishop
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THE BLACK BLOODHOUND

THE BLACK BLOODHOUND

BY

FARNHAM BISHOP

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To
MY WIFE

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THE BLACK BLOODHOUND

CHAPTER I: *"Prize Crew Away!"*

"TWO sail in sight, sir," reported Lieutenant Daniel Upton, officer of the deck, United States Frigate *Constellation,* as he opened the door of the captain's cabin. "A ship about half a league dead ahead, with her topmasts gone, and —"

"Confound it, sir, you had no occasion to disturb me for anything so trifling as that, Mr. Upton," rasped Captain Ezra T. Doughty, opening his tired old eyes to glare resentfully from his bunk. "Stand on and hail her, then let me know what she is. By the waters of Babylon! I haven't had a mite of sleep all night."

It was nervous work cruising in the Gulf of Florida, full of uncharted reefs and without a single buoy or lighthouse in that year 1825. Soon after sunset, and just clear of the Cay Sal Bank, the *Constellation* had encountered a smart gale from the nor'-nor'east, and headreached away, closehauled on the starboard tack under close-reefed topsails, foretopmast staysail and

trysail, topgallant yards on deck and topgallant masts struck.

All night Captain Doughty had kept the deck, until towards morning the gale lulled, and the sea that had been kicked up by the wind began to be smoothed out by the run of the Gulf Stream. Ordering Lieutenant Upton to shake a couple of reefs out of the topsails and carry on, the captain had gone below and turned in, just before daybreak. Hardly had he closed his eyes, or so it seemed to him, when he opened them to see the sunlight streaming in through the cabin port and Upton standing in the doorway.

"Suffering Shadrach!" swore Captain Doughty. "Thought you had sense enough not to wake me up, just to tell me that—"

"The *Black Bloodhound* is on our lee beam, sir, about five miles off," cut in the little lieutenant, rather unceremoniously.

"Do tell!"

The old Yankee seadog sprang out of his bunk and into his clothes like a fireman answering a night alarm. He wasted no time with the white silk stockings and skin-tight breeches of the period. His bony feet shot into a pair of pumps,

while a single sweep of his right arm wrapped him from chin to ankle in a long blue boat-cloak, and his left hand snatched up and clapped his cocked hat on his bald head.

Rushing up on the poop, Captain Doughty took Upton's proffered telescope and trained it first on the ship ahead and then on the schooner abeam.

"That's the villain, as sure as Gospel," he pronounced. "And a capture that he was plundering. Turn up all hands. Shake out the reefs, Mr. Upton. Back the main yard — lower the quarter-boat down — put twelve men in her, armed — take a master's mate and be ready, Mr. Upton, to shove off and take command of that ship. Do the best you can to repair the damage, and keep the frigate in sight as long as possible. Up helm, sir, as soon as you get on board and stand after us. Bear a hand, sir; you haven't a minute to spare for chest or bedding."

"A-a-all hands!" piped the shrill call of the boatswain's silver whistle. But already the watch below were tumbling up, ready and eager for action, for the word had flashed along the berth-deck that the *Black Bloodhound* was under the frigate's lee.

The sinister name was applied alike to the swift corsair craft and to her terrible commander, the most notorious and mysterious of all the pirates then infesting the Caribbean. Endless and incredible were the stories told about the man and his schooner, in every port of the islands and the east coast of the three Americas.

His topsail schooner was a beautiful Baltimore clipper of about two hundred tons displacement, her masts sharply raking, her low, graceful hull painted dead black, with blood-red port lids. She carried twelve eighteen-pounder carronades, one long thirty-two upon traversing slides amidships, and a human wolf-pack seventy strong, the poisonous scum of a score of nations.

Reputed the swiftest sailer afloat, and almost two leagues to leeward, the *Black Bloodhound* bade fair to give the frigate the slip. Prize-crew duty aboard the ship abandoned by the pirate promised better sport than a long stern chase, and besides, a sailor is always ready for a change. Upton was well liked forward, and there was a hearty response to his call for volunteers.

He began by choosing the senior master's mate, a tough old veteran of the War of 1812, called "Essex" Jackson because he had served in Porter's famous frigate.

"Pick six for your watch," Upton directed him, "and I'll pick mine."

Between them, they quickly selected twelve of the best seamen aboard from among the couple of hundred who volunteered. Just as Upton had hoped, the first lieutenant was too busily engaged for any muster or inspection of the prize crew. Otherwise, he would never have let his junior get away with so many excellent hands.

Backing her main yard, the *Constellation* lost headway just long enough for the quarter-boat to be lowered away without being dragged under and swamped. Then she squared away under a gathering cloud of canvas, with topgallant masts swaying up and stuns'ls hoisting away, in pursuit of the fleeing pirate.

A pathetic contrast to the glorious old frigate was the other ship, the *Black Bloodhound's* mangled and abandoned prey. A staunch American-built merchantman of about six hundred tons, she lay rolling helplessly in the trough

of the sea, everything carried away above her tops, and the wreckage still hanging overside. Stark and grim, swaying like a pendulum with every roll of the ship, a dead man hung by his neck from the pendantblock on the starboard end of the cro'jack yardarm.

Upton's eyes, following the white-clothed corpse through the swing of its arc, suddenly noticed a mounting swirl of pale blue vapor against the deeper blue of the tropic sky.

"Stretch to it, lads!" he commanded, even as Essex Jackson reported: "That ship's on fire forward, sir."

Thicker and higher rolled the smoke, with every stroke of the straining oars, as the brawny boat's crew drove the quarter-boat leaping over the white-capped crests and racing down the long green slopes at a pace that soon swallowed up the mile of sea-room that had lain between them and the burning ship.

She was rolling deep in the trough, with her canvas flapping and snapping like musket shots and the sea breaking heavily against her weather rail. To get under her lee, Upton rounded her stern, glancing up as they shot under her counter

to read her name and home port: *Brotherly Love,* Philadelphia.

"Way enough!" Upton cried at last, as another stroke swept them 'round her port quarter into a Sargasso Sea of tangled gear, sodden canvas and broken spars, half floating, half hanging, under the derelict's lee. It took smart work and clever steering to bring the cutter alongside without fouling that mass of wreckage. Seizing a dangling topsail halliard, Upton swarmed up it and over the rail.

Never before had he seen such devastation and plunder. Bales, barrels and packing cases, broken open and partly emptied, lay about in every direction. Costly silks, muslins, laces, sheets of music, handsomely bound books and a thousand other articles, mutilated, torn and defiled, were scattered fore and aft.

Blood was everywhere; reddening the once snowy deck planks, drenching the wide-scattered plunder, spattered over the white-painted cabin bulkhead, the longboat and the galley, and even staining the pool of sea water swashing about in the lee scuppers. More than a dozen dead men, brutally hacked and mangled, lay where the pirates had cut them down.

Sick and faint, Lieutenant Upton leaned against the lee rail for a moment, utterly benumbed by the horrible sight before him. He had been in battles and seen more than one gallant crew mown down by grape and roundshot and cutlass blade. But those killings had been in fair fight. This was cold-blooded murder — and worse.

There was no time for moralizing, however, with thick smoke rolling up from the fore hatch. Leading his men forward at the run, Upton set them to work fighting the fire. So utter had been the devastation aboard that it took hard hunting to find even a bucket.

"Rig the pumps!" commanded Upton, glancing about him for ways and means. "What's in those casks lashed to the foremast, Smiley? Water?"

"No, sir," reported the thirsty sailor, whose instinct had led him straight to those two open barrels. "One's full of white wine, and t'other's full of red wine, sir."

"Douse 'em down the hatchway," ordered the lieutenant in a tone that brooked no argument or delay.

"Lord, what a sinful waste!" groaned Jim

Smiley to Barbary Jones, as they poured the claret after the canary.

"You junk-headed jack-snipe!" growled the unsympathetic old shellback. "Why didn't you tell him it was rum and brandy? They burn!"

"Fire hose cut and pumps disabled, sir," reported the master's mate.

"Very good, Mr. Jackson," replied Upton, with proper outward composure while inwardly wondering what to do next.

Eight or nine buckets were now in action, passing rapidly from hand to hand along a line of men from the lee fore chains to the hatch. But the fire had obtained too great a start. Unless more water was turned on the flames at once, the *Brotherly Love* was doomed.

Upton, bracing his legs apart to meet an extra-heavy weather roll of the ship, observed a great part of the blood-stained pool in the rag-clogged lee scuppers go swashing across the deck and back again, without spilling a drop inside the unusually high combing of the burning hatchway.

"Cut away that hatch combing, Mr. Jackson," he directed. "Open all weather gun ports!

Lay that broken fore royal arm on deck, slantwise, from the forward weather corner of the hatchway to just below the starboard chase-gun port sill. Lash and chock it fast. Lay that sail across and along the spar. Bank up the canvas so that it turns the water aft and inboard. Rig the same sort of contraption from the after angle of the hatch to a midships port, with those stuns'l booms and bales of blanketing. Stand by to trice up all weather port lids between the booms. Bear a hand with the broad-axes! Lively, there!"

Something like an irrigation system was swiftly improvised on the deck of the *Brotherly Love*. Although absolutely unarmed, as befitted her Quaker name, she had her bulwarks pierced, like those of almost every merchant vessel of the period, with proper ports for mounting long guns or carronades on either broadside.

Up went the weather port lids, as down she sank on the weather roll. In swept the sea in solid green tons over each sunken sill. Up and back she lurched on the lee roll. Lifted and surging inboard, the trapped waters were pent and focussed by the two improvised wing dams

to pour in a thundering waterfall down into the blazing fore hold.

Up spouted a hissing cloud of steam, raining wet ashes like a little volcanic eruption. Another dose followed, and a third. Then the diminishing mass of smoke and steam shredded out and blew away to leeward.

"Close and secure port lids," ordered Upton. "Send a hand below, Mr. Jackson, to make sure that there are no sparks left burning. Have that poor fellow's body brought down from the cro'jack yard immediately. Then clear away the wreckage alongside and make sail with all despatch, or we'll lose sight of the frigate."

Mounting the lee fore shrouds, he saw the *Constellation* far to leeward, running free under every kite she could set in the wake of the *Black Bloodhound,* now hull down on the horizon.

"Looks like a lonely cruise to Kingston," meditated Upton, as he descended the ratlines to the deck. "Hope this packet is well found. Is the fire all out, Mr. Jackson?"

"Seemingly so, sir," reported the master's mate. "Them pirates must ha' been blind

drunk when they set it down thar, in a regular chimley, as you can see, Cap'n Upton."

Boyishly elated at being addressed for the first time as a ship's commander, Upton looked down the fore hatch, now clear of smoke and reeking of burnt wool. The smell told him what sort of slow-burning goods made up the solid mass of blackened bales that walled the four sides of the vertical shaft or chimney, dug out of the cargo, at the bottom of which pit the pirates had evidently piled up combustibles, with a slow match to set them afire, before the prize crew could come aboard.

A cargo whip running through a block on the foreyard, overhanging the hatchway, and the opened bales and boxes scattered about the deck, seemed to indicate that the pillagers had been breaking out the *Brotherly Love's* cargo when sunrise revealed the frigate. Apparently, they had been sinking a shaft straight down through the dry goods to reach whatever was stowed beneath them.

"A regular chimney, as you said, Mr. Jackson," observed the young prize master. "Those slow-burning bales of blankets, or whatever this woolen stuff is, kept the deck beams from catch-

ing. What's below there, underneath the bales?"

"Kegs and bar'ls, sir. From what Jones can make out by feeling around in the burned muck atop of them, the fire was built on the lowest tier o' dry goods and hadn't quite finished burning down through it and the heads of the bar'ls below."

"What is in the barrels?"

"Below there, Barbary! What's in them bar'ls?"

"Dunno, sir," answered a voice from the depths. "They're all charred on top, so I can't feel no marks nor letterin'. Shall I stave one in, sir?"

Upton smiled and shook his head. He knew old Barbary Jones and the sort of keg he could be depended upon to find in the darkest hold.

"Break out a loose barrel instead and sling it to the cargo whip," he ordered. "Can you find a loose one?"

"Aye, aye, sir. All fast. Heave away!"

"Tail on and walk away with it!" shouted Essex Jackson. "'Vast heaving. Ease it down on deck, here. Pass me that belayin' pin."

The first blow shattered the wet, charred

wood of the barrel head into small fragments. Burned on top, it nevertheless had kept the contents dry and intact. Black and glistening in the brilliant tropic sunshine gleamed the polished grains of a barrelful of gunpowder.

CHAPTER II: *The Voice in the Cabin*

RECOVERING from the shock of the discovery, Essex Jackson exploded with a roar worthy of the powder barrel itself.

"Turn to!" he thundered at the ring of seamen who were staring their eyes out in horrified fascination. "Bear a hand, you crab-eyed, sojerin' wasters, or I'll make you wish you'd been blowed up and put out o' your misery!"

This was too much for Abner Barlow, the youngest man aboard. He failed to suppress a half-hysterical chuckle that drew down on him the full wrath of the grim old master's mate.

"Laughin', be ye? I'll sober you, my merry young gentleman. Take your needle and palm and stitch up each and every one of them dead men, fit for burial."

It was dreadful work for a boy, but Abner went at it with set teeth and averted eyes, while his comrades were clearing away the wreckage.

Eleven prime seamen under two very capable officers can do a miraculous amount of work in a given time. Before the *Constellation's* royals had disappeared to the sou'-sou'west, the *Brotherly Love* was running free in her wake, under foresail, mainsail, mizzen staysail and driver.

Soon, however, the frigate slipped over the rim of the world, as the *Black Bloodhound* had done long since. Left to his own devices, Upton kept his crew busy swabbing away the blood stains, splicing the broken rigging, fishing the fallen yards, and making all shipshape again, alow and aloft.

"Sun's over the yardarm," he observed to Jackson. "Time to pick a cook and set him to boiling the coppers for din — What the deuce is that?"

Every man aboard started and looked around, as a long, shrill scream of mortal terror resounded through the ship. Apparently it came from somewhere below. Again it shrilled, nearer and louder. Up out of the companionway staggered Abner Barlow, ghastly pale and gibbering like a maniac.

"The lady!" he screeched, as he fell face

downward in convulsions on the deck. "The lady!"

Essex Jackson snatched a freshly filled bucket from one of the deck swabbers and dashed the cold sea water over the trembling boy. Sobered by the shock, Abner rolled over and sat up, blinking and gasping.

"What were you doin' below?" demanded the master's mate sternly. "Didn't I order you to sew up shrouds?"

"R-ran out of t-twine, sir," faltered Abner. "Didn't have no more about me, on account of the first lieutenant's not giving us time to fetch our ditty bags along. So I went below to overhaul the lockers, sir.

"Lord, but it's the gosh-awfullest sight down there in the cabin. There's five of 'em lying there in a row, with their throats cut from clew to earring. And right aft, by the stern transom, is a lady, a beautiful young lady, sir, with three of her fingers cut away and a great knife wound right through her heart.

"She's lying there with her head back against the transom and her eyes wide open and a-staring right at a little sort of cupboard door in the paneling of the larboard bulkhead, sir. Thinks

I: mebbe I'll find what I'm looking for in here. So I raises my hand and takes hold of the little chiny knob of the cupboard door, sir. The very instant I does so, I hears the dead woman give the deepest, awfullest kind of a groan. I fetches my fingers away like the knob was red-hot, sir. Then I tells myself it must be the rudder bearing down on the gudgeons, so I takes holt of the knob again, sir. And at that, so help me, sir, the dead lady ups and calls me by my name! 'Abner,' she says, slow and sorrowful like, 'Abner!'" Shuddering, the youngster buried his face in his trembling hands. "It's a jedgment on me, for runnin' away to sea. I'll never see home no more."

"You'll see the brig and feel the cat, boy," Essex Jackson began, when the lieutenant interposed.

"Take the deck, Mr. Jackson. I'll handle this. Listen to me, Barlow. There must be some one still left alive in the cabin. I'm going down there myself to find him, and you're coming with me."

"Please don't make me do that, Mr. Upton, sir," wailed poor Abner. "There's sperrits down there, a-callin' me by name."

"Your duty's calling you," said the officer. "You're a man-o'-warsman, now. Will you flinch from your gun or will you play the man? Follow me."

Turning on his heel, without another word or a backward look, Upton went aft and below. His cocked hat was disappearing down the companionway when Abner Barlow rose and came tottering after him.

"That called for pluck, that did," whispered Jim Smiley to Barbary Jones, as he wrung out his reddened swab.

The old shellback made no direct answer, but only muttered while plying his holystone:

"Scour and scrub and scrape her, but you'll never wash off the blood. The Black Bloodhound has trod her deck and he's no mortal man. There's a curse on this craft and more blood to flow, afore this cruise is out!"

The cabin of the *Brotherly Love* was large and handsome, with staterooms opening off it to port and starboard. She had evidently been built for the passenger trade. Every nook and corner, so it seemed, had been ransacked and pillaged. Leather and horsehair trunks with smashed locks and lids hanging by one hinge,

empty carpet bags and torn bandboxes, lay all about. Not only had the lockers and drawers been turned out, but the upholstery of the chairs and settees had been cut open, as if in search of hidden treasure. The very carpet had been ripped off the cabin floor and hurled into a heap that half blocked the foot of the companionway.

Beyond this mound of carpeting, in a great red pool in the midst of the bare planking lay the five dead men spoken of by Abner Barlow. By their fine lawn shirts, and tight nankeen or kerseymere trousers, strapped under their varnished boots, they had been passengers. Their bodies lay side by side, each with his arms tightly pinioned behind his back and his head nearly severed from his shoulders.

Reclining against the stern transom and supported in that position by a firmly wedged mass of emptied trunks and broken chairs, rested the tall, graceful body of the most beautiful young woman that Upton had ever seen. Her dishevelled hair fell down over her shoulders to below her waist in a glorious golden fleece. Beneath the long yellow curls, the upper part of her once dainty dress of white sprigged muslin had been rudely torn away, revealing a deep stab wound

below the left breast. It did not need the touch of his finger tips to her outflung bare arm, as white and cold as that of a marble statue, to tell him that she had been dead for hours.

"Take her feet and help me lift her up on the transom, Barlow. Now clear away that mass of dunnage she was penned in by. You've never sailed in a merchantman, my lad."

"No, sir," acknowledged Barlow, wondering how the lieutenant knew.

"Because if you had," continued Upton, picking up a rolling candle end and lighting it deftly with his pocket tinderbox, "you'd have known where to look for the lazarette door."

The removal of the broken trunks and other wreckage revealed the lower part of a narrow door that matched the bulkhead paneling so perfectly that Abner had never noticed the hair-line cracks at the jamb. He pulled it open, revealing the top of a ladder leading down into a mysterious black cave below.

"Any one below there in the lazarette?" hailed Upton. "Boarding officer from the *Constellation* speaking. Who's there?"

No one answered, then, or after the hail had been repeated.

"Are you game to go down there—alone?"

"Aye, aye, sir," said the boy, white to the lips but pressing doggedly forward to prove his courage, even as Upton had hoped he would.

"Wait! Draw your cutlass. Take this candle and be dashed careful you don't set the ship afire. Call if you need help."

He watched Barlow descend the ladder as if it had been a flight of stairs, and step off at the bottom.

"There doesn't seem to be nothin' here, sir," called the youngster, holding the candle over his head and peering about him.

"Search the whole place carefully, while I go through these staterooms, then."

Making a rapid tour of both sides of the cabin, Upton found every stateroom ransacked and gutted, every berth stripped of bedding, every mattress and pillow ripped open. Nowhere could he find a sign of any living being.

In no pleasant frame of mind he turned to meet young Barlow as the latter emerged from the lazarette.

"Nothin' down there except a torn sack with some rice in it, sir," he reported, and blew out the candle.

"Barlow," demanded the lieutenant sternly, "what the deuce do you mean by telling such a cock-and-bull story to —"

"O-o-oh, Lord! Oh, merciful Father!"

"Don't interrupt, sirrah," snapped Upton.

"Begging your honor's pardon, sir," protested Barlow, "it wasn't me that spoke, sir."

Officer and seaman stood staring into each other's dumbfounded eyes. They had searched everywhere and yet —

Barlow opened his mouth as if to protest further, but the lieutenant silenced him with a look and a finger laid across his own lips. Together they stood and listened intently, through the creaking of the ship's timbers, the groaning of the rudder, the wind in the rigging, the squelch and thump of the swabs and holystones on deck, for the sound of the mysterious voice.

Waiting and listening, Upton thought of the cupboard door of which Barlow had spoken. He looked toward the spot on which the dead woman's gaze had been fixed, at the after end of the larboard bulkhead. There, balancing the lazarette door directly opposite, was the little cupboard. By the huddle of sheets and napery, mixed with the splinters of torn-out shelving,

just below on the cabin floor, this place must have served as the steward's linen closet.

The door itself was so small and set so high in the bulkhead that it seemed manifestly impossible for any grown man or woman to hide behind it. Nevertheless, since this was the one spot left unsearched, Upton threw open the cupboard door.

What he saw inside sent him staggering back, sickened with horror.

"My soul, he ain't got no legs nor no face!" Abner Barlow gasped behind him.

Wedged into the cupboard was the upper half of a man's naked body, flogged, flayed and scorched from hip to head. His left side was turned toward them. Down over his shoulder looked a hideous, shapeless mask of red and black, out of which two gray eyes were staring piteously.

"Scored him off like pork with a knife point, rubbed gunpowder into the cuts and set it off," growled Upton, who had been stationed five years in the West Indies and had seen such work before.

Thrusting his arm in around the small of the man's back, the wiry little lieutenant pulled him

out of his hiding place. The bottom had been knocked out of the cupboard; below was a narrowing space between two bulkheads, deep enough to hold his legs, drafty enough to save him from suffocation.

"Let me give you a hand, sir," offered Barlow.

"I'll carry him, thanks," said Upton, who had asked the seaman's aid in lifting the dead girl but now lifted the huge, limp bulk of the half-dead refugee as tenderly and easily as he would have handled a little child. "You take some of those clean sheets into the captain's room. Spread one on the bunk, rip up another for bandages. Fetch me the medicine chest in the skipper's room and that big cruet of sweet oil from the sideboard."

Together they poulticed and bandaged the sufferer as best they knew, from head to feet.

"Has he any chance to live, do you think, sir?" whispered Abner Barlow.

Upton nodded.

"He is an iron-built man, in the prime of life. His injuries, though frightful, are all on the surface. If his vitals are sound, he ought to recover. But his mind must have endured a fear-

ful shock from what he has seen and suffered."

Bending over the patient, who was staring at him with the eyes of a suffering animal, Upton spoke reassuringly.

"Don't worry or fear. We've taken charge and we'll see you safely through. Lie back and rest."

There was no sign of understanding in the other's eyes.

CHAPTER III: *The U. S. S. "Brotherly Love"*

"I ONLY hope, sir," rumbled Essex Jackson, in tones that were anything but hopeful, "that this poor mistreated mortal you've just found below ain't too far gone to relish salt junk and sea biscuit, for there's nothing else left to eat aboard this ship, sir.

"I app'inted Joel Morse cook, pursuant to orders, and then disrated him, on account of there bein' nothin' left for him to cook, sir. Them thus-and-so pirates have made a clean sweep of the hencoop, pigpen, bread room and what seems to have been a riding tier of provisions in the after hold, besides the lazarette, sir. They didn't leave so much as a doughnut on the galley shelves, gol ram their greedy souls.

"Likewise, they've taken all the fresh water, 'cept what's in the scuttle butt. There isn't a drop of rum or whisky, but somehow they missed a bar'l of claret and another of what I jedge to be white Bordeaux, sir. Then there's the

full water breaker we brought with us in the boat, together with that big lump of salt horse and a full bread bag. That's all the stores we have for the run to Kingston, Cap'n Upton."

"Sounds like a genteel sufficiency, provided this wind holds," said Upton thoughtfully. "But I'd figured on feeding my patient chicken broth. Come to think of it, Abner Barlow found some rice in a torn sack left in the lazarette. Tell Joel Morse to salvage that and make some gruel for the poor fellow in the cabin.

"Better have those two casks of wine moved aft before they start leaking. Then pipe all hands to dinner and serve out a half pint all round. By the way, did you bring your quadrant?"

"No, sir. Hadn't a jiffy to go below for it."

"Neither had I," admitted Upton. "Have to be pretty spry to move fast enough to satisfy Captain Ezra T. Doughty. Well, Mr. Jackson, it looks as if we'd have to navigate this hooker by dead reckoning. Some drunken pirate seems to have amused himself last night by using the skipper's quadrant for a hammer to smash up the chronometers with. He certainly made a thorough job of both instruments.

"However, our present position isn't hard to find. We were just clear of the Cay Sal Bank last night at sundown, when it began to blow from the nor'-nor'east. So we ought to raise the north coast of Cuba pretty soon, somewhere along the Vuelta Abajo."

"Exactly, sir. And if I might make the suggestion, Cap'n, seein' as you had the deck last night while I had a watch below, you mought turn in for a spell of sleep after dinner, sir."

"I'll send my watch below then, now that the pressure of duty is slacking off," agreed Upton. "But there's one thing more to be done before that."

"'I am the Resurrection and the Life,' saith the Lord."

How often had every officer and seaman of the West India Squadron listened to those majestic opening words of the burial service, as he stood uncovered beside the canvas-shrouded body of another shipmate killed by a pirate's bullet or the far deadlier Yellow Jack, in those years of endless cruising off the fever-ridden Cuban coast. Conning the sonorous phrases

over in his mind, while the ship lay to and the bluejackets were bringing up the murdered passengers of the *Brotherly Love* to lie in the lee gangway beside her murdered crew, Upton found that he knew the entire service by heart.

One of the burial party brought him a mutilated pocket Bible which he had picked up from the cabin floor "Thinking it might come in handy, sir."

It was only the beginning of the Old Testament, from Genesis through the first line of Job 5, 10. The cover had been torn off and most of the fly-leaf with it. On the narrow, triangular fragment left of the page was written in a feminine hand:

"To Abner L
From hi
Ida"

This was the first clew pointing to the identity of any of the eighteen dead men and the one dead woman found aboard. Was her name Ida, and was this the Abner whose name the prisoner in the cupboard had been calling? Setting aside all speculation for the present, Upton uncovered and began to pronounce the service over the unknown dead.

All hands stood listening, reverently, but with more of grimness than of sorrow in their faces. Bitter and vengeful were their silent prayers as they thought of this fair young woman and her defenceless shipmates so foully done to death. And where were the others who had sailed with them? Nineteen corpses had been found, but the search of the ship had made it clear to a seaman's eye that there could not have been less than forty or fifty souls aboard the *Brotherly Love.*

What had become of the missing? Had they been carried off into captivity, or thrown overboard, perhaps still living, to the sharks? Who could tell? Only the Black Bloodhound and his sea wolves; only the dumb, tortured thing below, muttering madness and staring at the unseen.

When the last body had been committed to the deep, they squared the yards and resumed their course. Upton took a final glance aloft before ordering his watch below.

"Wind's falling, Mr. Jackson," he observed. "Better take that reef out of the foresail."

"Aloft, foreyardmen!" bawled the master's mate, as though he were still exhorting the crew of a frigate. "Lay out and loose!"

"Land ho!" cried the first man out on the foreyard.

"Where away?"

"Three points off the larboard bow, sir. Looks like a mountain peak a-sticking up."

"About time we were raising the Organ Range," remarked Upton, focussing the long glass that he had received back at the last minute from Captain Doughty. "Ha! I know that peak, Mr. Jackson. It's the Pan de Guajaibón. We're off Bahia Honda and about one hundred and fifty miles east of Cape San Antonio. Carry on and let me know if anything happens.

"Go below the watch!"

In the cabin, now purged of its horrors, he found the wounded man, apparently somewhat eased of his pain, sunk into the deep stupor of utter exhaustion. Feeling rather that way himself, Upton went into the next room, unbuckled his sword belt, pulled off his high-collared, long-tailed coat and tight Hessian boots for the first time in twenty-four hours, and fell asleep as soon as he threw himself on the bunk.

When he came on deck to take the first dog-watch, he found that the *Brotherly Love* had

logged a bare seventeen knots in the three hours since they had made their landfall. The wind was failing fast. By sundown, it was merely a fitful breeze, with longer and longer interludes of calm.

All that night, all the next day and the day after that, the good ship plodded and drifted, now making a bit of westing, now becalmed for hours, while the ever-shifting currents kept turning her head through half the points of the compass. The big lump of salt junk grew smaller, the bread bag lighter, and the water breaker emptier, day by day. The scuttle butt had long since been drained.

"And we're still a hundred miles east of Cape San Antone, sir," pointed out Essex Jackson. "If you'll let me take an armed boat's crew ashore, Cap'n, I'll engage to fetch back provisions and water, sir."

"I've been thinking about that," answered Upton. "According to law and equity, Mr. Jackson, we being at peace with Spain, this is a friendly coast."

"So I noticed, sir, when first we came aboard," replied the sardonic veteran.

"Nevertheless, Mr. Jackson, let's assume that

on going ashore you'll find a friendly and peaceable population, ready to sell yams, beef and fresh water at market prices. Just how do you propose to pay those market prices?"

"Why, of course, I suppose — do you mean to say, sir, that you haven't any money?"

"Not a Continental," admitted Upton, "except what's locked up in the till of my chest, aboard the *Constellation.* What's the use of money in your pocket at sea, except to spoil the fit of your breeches and rouse the wrath of Captain Ezra T. Doughty? I'll wager you haven't a cent about you, either, nor any of the hands forward. And you know how much ready cash the *Black Bloodhound* has left aboard."

"By blue, blisterin' blazes!" apostrophized Essex Jackson. "I never thought o' that. But then, there ain't no danger of the Diegos bein' friendly and expectin' us to pay, anyhow. They're all pirates or friends of pirates along this stretch of coast. Just send me in, sir, and I'll spile the Egyptians."

"How many men would you want?"

"I was figurin' on eight, besides myself, sir."

Upton shook his head decisively.

"That would leave only five of us to work the

ship. Suppose a gale should spring up or you be cut off ashore? If we part company like that, we're inviting the risk of being gobbled up separately. Since we're so weak, we'd better stick together and make a bold brag. As long as we were looking so crippled and helpless, I've been purposely keeping out of sight from shore, so's not to tempt the unrighteous. But this hooker isn't looking much like the crippled craft we boarded day before yesterday, is she, Mr. Jackson?"

Urged by the need of getting more canvas on her, as the wind diminished, they had sent up the *Brotherly Love's* upper masts and yards, bent new topsails and to'gallant sails, and thoroughly overhauled her standing and running gear, until she was all ataunto. A National ensign, which the pirates had thrown derisively into the pigpen, had been reverently cleansed and run up again to the mizzen peak.

"Give her a pennant at the main," suggested Upton, "and then, with her white-banded black hull and row of portlids, how'd she do for a corvette?"

"She'd look like enough to fool anybody, sir. As a Quaker craft, she ought to carry some

Quaker guns. Them two spar butts, with a touch of the chisel and a lick of black paint, would make downright handsome long eighteens, run out of the forward ports."

"A very sound notion, Mr. Jackson." Upton approved. "Looks like a breath of wind from the nor'west. If it comes, we'll work inshore on to-night's tide. We ought to fetch the mouth of the Rio Rosario and pay our respects to-morrow morning to that flea-bitten den of iniquity, La Palma. I'll have two hands row me ashore in the gig, and do my best to reason with the alcalde, while you lie in the offing and look impressive.

"Under the circumstances, I guess the old thief will be very polite and obliging. The trouble will be to get him to accept my order on the Treasury as payment for supplies. However, if I let him fix his own prices and give him a chance to rob us sufficiently, I guess we can do business."

"I'll have the pennant and Quakers fixed up right away," promised Essex Jackson. "There comes a cat's-paw yonder. I do believe, sir, we're goin' to have some wind."

They did. By the end of the second dog-

watch, it was blowing a fine, steady, full-sail breeze.

"I've shifted my plans," announced Upton. "No sense in risking this fine vessel off an unlighted lee shore, in weather like this. We'll bear away for Cape San Antonio."

"Guess our belts will be pretty tight by the time we reach Jamaiky," said the master's mate. "Still, there's lots of shipping passing through the Yucatan Channel. Hadn't we better speak the first sail we fall in with, sir, for some more supplies?"

"Absolutely. Pass the word to keep a sharp lookout."

All night they sped along with a beam wind, logging from nine to ten knots. They saw no lights nor any sign of another vessel, until the dawn showed Cape San Antonio off the lee bow, Saddle Hill bearing south by east. They were beating to windward, to round the long reef off the cape, when the lookout in the fore crosstrees hailed the deck.

"Black smoke rolling up at sea, just around the point, sir. Looks like a ship on fire!"

"It does for a fact," observed Upton, as he studied the rising smoke cloud through his tele-

scope. "More piracy, I'm afraid. This used to be a notorious place for it, hereabouts."

"Helped clear it out once, when I was in the *Porpoise* in '21, sir," affirmed Essex Jackson. "We boarded and took two pirate schooners, chased their boats right up on that beach yonder, landed and fought a shore action. What'll we do now, sir?"

"Hoist the pennant, run out those dummy guns through the chase ports and carry on," Upton ordered.

CHAPTER IV: *The Demon Ship*

THE sham corvette stretched away on a bowline, the pennant fluttering at her main truck, the two wooden guns peering black and business-like through the chase ports over her foaming bows. By Upton's orders, his dozen men kept showing themselves and their uniforms in as many different places as possible, to make it seem as though this formidable looking warship were carrying a full crew.

All hands entered into the spirit of the game with joyous zeal.

"Dog my cats!" vowed Joel Morse, bobbing up and down on the fo'c'sle head with his cap stuck on a swab. "If there's any pirates round that headland, they'll drop dead with fright when they see us comin'."

"Hope they won't run into shoal water where we can't lay 'em aboard," prayed Jim Smiley. "Lord, how the smoke keeps a-rollin' up from that burnin' craft. She can't be more 'n a mile

or so to the sou'westward of the cape. 'Nother cable length and we'll see her clear."

Every eye was watching the palm-covered headland wheeling slowly back, and the slanting column of smoke beyond kept moving nearer and nearer the tip of the point, until at last it slid past and out into open water.

"Thar she be! What the— Ho! Ho! Ho!"

Uncontrollable laughter burst out fore and aft.

"It's a steamboat!"

Feeling rather foolish and theatrical yet greatly relieved, Lieutenant Upton looked at the strange craft. His first thought was that this must be the United States steam galiot *Sea Gull,* a quaint little side-wheel passenger boat from Long Island Sound which, converted and armed with three big guns, had been doing good service against the pirates in these waters for the past two years, 1824 and 1825.

But the great ocean steamer that he saw before him now was seven or eight times the size of that tiny gunboat. She was rigged as a three-masted topsail schooner, with high steeved bowsprit and clipper stem. Her two tall, slender

funnels were placed side by side, a little abaft the foremast. Despite the dense clouds of smoke pouring up out of these twin stacks, her paddle wheels were not revolving. Nor had she a sail set. With canvas furled and engines idle, she was slowly drifting, stern foremost, dead to leeward.

Lying in this position, she presented her starboard paddle box so that Upton, with the aid of his spyglass, could make out her name.

"The *Robert Fulton,*" he announced. "I've heard of her, but I've never seen her before. She's Dunham and Company's big steam packet, out of New York to Charleston and New Orleans. Seems to be having a breakdown in her engine room."

"Then why don't the dash-dotted fools aboard her make sail?" demanded Essex Jackson. "They're no sailors! Can't they see that she'll pile up stern foremost on them rocks astern in another hour, unless they get way on her? Be a good riddance if she did get wrecked, though. I never had no use for steamboats nor never will."

"We can find a use for this one, right now, Mr. Jackson. I'll send you aboard to show her

teakettle navigators how to make sail. In return for that, they ought to be willing to let us have what stores we need, and to take our passenger to New York, where he can — Hullo! What's that?"

"Somethin' else gone wrong aboard her, sir?" asked Jackson eagerly, as the lieutenant looked very intently through the long glass.

"There's more in this than meets the eye, Mr. Jackson. No end of scurrying about on deck, and I noticed a puff of smoke just now that looked mightily like a pistol shot. Can't hear any report so far to windward, but we'll bear down on her and keep our eyes peeled."

Nothing in particular seemed to be happening aboard the *Robert Fulton* during the next five minutes, so far as could be seen from the *Brotherly Love*. Up to this time, the steamer had shown no colors. Essex Jackson's eye caught the red and white of her bunting as soon as it rose clear of the after deckhouse.

"Running up her ensign, sir," he reported. "Union down!"

For an instant that signal of distress showed plain against the cloudless sky. Then, before it had been run up more than a third of the way

to the mizzen peak, the inverted ensign suddenly ceased to rise, wavered, and sank swiftly down out of sight.

"Mutineers or pirates!" cried Jackson. "They've got the man at the color halliards!"

"Fire a musket, to let them know that we've seen the signal," ordered Upton. "I'd give a year's pay for a carronade and a stand of grape, but we must do the best we can. We'll run down to leeward and lay her aboard."

"Very good, sir. But how in creation are we going to get alongside her, with them ugly great millwheels sticking out abeam? Even if we was to run up under her bow and lash the fore shrouds together, our bowsprit would never clear her wheel, sir."

"You're right, Mr. Jackson. Take the glass and have a look at her starboard quarter. From the angle of the quarter, what sort of stern would you say she had?"

"Ship-built and either very slightly rounded, or more likely, cut off square, sir."

"So it looks to me. Clap her aboard right athwart the counter. Have grapnels ready to make fast to the taffrail. Serve out the small arms. Be prepared to sweep her deck with mus-

ketry, in case we meet with resistance, and then board through the cabin windows or over the after rail."

Each of the two officers had his service sword and a brace of pistols; each of the twelve seamen had a Harper's Ferry musket, a long-barrelled boarding pistol and a brass-hilted cutlass. Paper cartridges were bitten open, flintlocks primed, powder, wadding, buck and ball rammed home. Boat anchors were fitted with lanyards, ready for heaving.

In the midst of these warlike preparations came another hail from the almost forgotten lookout.

"Large boat shoving off from the steamer, sir!"

Out from under the *Robert Fulton's* port quarter, where it had been completely concealed from the eyes of those aboard the *Brotherly Love,* shot a longboat big enough to be called a galley. Pulling ten oars a side, it sped for the coast of Cuba, half a league away, as fast as twenty pairs of arms could drive it.

Training his glass on the racing longboat, Upton saw that it was manned by a very mixed lot of able-bodied men. At least half were

stripped to the waist, and the color of their skins ran through every shade from buff to black. By the way they were snatching her through the water, they were not only practised oarsmen but well accustomed to pulling together. All they needed was a long bronze or iron twelve-pounder in the bows of their galley to be a typical gang of offshore pirates, such as Upton had hunted down a score of times in Cuban waters during the past five years.

Now, however, he was a hunter without a gun. Moreover, he had to keep on the starboard tack for another quarter of an hour before he could clear the western end of the long reef, come about, and make after the suspicious looking longboat — which by that time would be safe in shoal water. Unable either to fire upon or pursue the rowers, Upton turned to see what was happening next aboard the *Robert Fulton*.

"By Jove, Mr. Jackson, the steamboat's getting under way!"

They saw her starboard paddle wheel begin to turn, slowly at first, then faster and faster, churning up the water with all the force of the pent-up steam. A white wake quickly formed

and lengthened astern, as the packet commenced to steam directly to windward.

Soon, however, her head began to fall off to port. Around she swung, until she was heading southward.

"What in creation?" demanded Essex Jackson. "Is she puttin' back to New Orleans?"

Upton shook his head, while he pointed his finger at the creaming wake that was so strange and novel a sight to those old-time man-o'-warsmen.

"Look at that curve she's tracing across the blue. Her helm's still hard-a-starboard, and she's steaming in a big circle. Working up speed with every turn of her wheels. Guess there's nothing wrong with her engines, by the pace she's making."

Essex Jackson spat over the lee rail and muttered an ugly word. He hated the sight of that hideous black hulk, with its smoking chimneys, its cross-head beam bobbing up and down in a frame that looked like two monstrous capital A's, its wheels trampling around in their bulging boxes, and its indecently naked masts, with every inch of smoke-blackened canvas tightly furled.

Turning his head away from the detestable

steamer, now curving round to the eastward, the master's mate soothed his offended eyes with the beautifully rhythmic dip and swing of the twenty oars that were bearing the longboat nearer and nearer to the friendly shoreward shoals. Those aboard her were a bad lot, most likely — same sort of a looking crowd as the hundred black-and-tan scalawags that he had chased ashore at this very point, with forty bold lads from the old *Porpoise,* and whipped in a stand-up fight on a green savanna a mile and a half inland. Essex Jackson would have liked nothing better than to be in command of a naval cutter about to overhaul that longboat and teach her crew the error of their ways. But the rogues knew how to row; he'd say that for them.

Into the field of his vision was suddenly thrust the stubby, high-steeved bowsprit of the *Robert Fulton,* now heading northward in her swing around the circle. The reason for her fetching that wide circuit became grimly plain. The steamer had cut the longboat off from the shore and trapped it under her bows.

" Pull for it, you picaroons! " exhorted Essex Jackson, pounding the rail. " Hold your course till she's right atop of you — then toss your lar-

board oars and spin 'round like a top! Pull!"

But the sight of those black bows rushing down upon them at unearthly speed proved too much for the rowers' nerves. Their splendid stroke checked, wavered and collapsed into a crazy welter of splashing oars. Some were still pulling while others frantically backed, on each side of the boat. Losing all headway, the long-boat lay rocking and drifting, with her broadside turned toward the sharp cutwater that was slashing down upon her like an avenging sword.

Through the telescope, Lieutenant Upton could see one man crossing himself, while another was crouching ready to make a leap for the martingale as soon as the bowsprit should loom overboard. A third man whipped out and pointed his pistol, as if he could frighten off eight hundred tons of oak with an ounce of lead.

Only the steersman kept his head. Standing up in the stern sheets, he threw all his weight on the long steering oar, sculling her head around by his own unaided strength. Instead of chopping the boat in two, the steamer's cutwater came rasping and rubbing along the port gunwale, snapping off every oar on that side, but leaving the galley intact and afloat.

"Missed 'em!" cried Jackson.

"Got 'em," contradicted Upton. "Poor fellows, there they go!"

Sheering a little to starboard, the steamer kept the helpless longboat close to her towering side as she shouldered past. The steersman and one or two others dived overboard. Before the rest could make up their minds to follow or shift an oar and shove themselves clear, they and the boat were trampled to splinters and bloody foam beneath the floats of the paddle wheel.

A few heads bobbed to the surface and stayed there. But without displaying the least interest in these survivors, the *Robert Fulton* steamed on at full speed toward Charleston and New York.

This callous action of the steamer's captain made Upton highly indignant and forced him to make an unexpected decision. Upton was still abeam of the reef, but by holding to his present course he would pass the end of it just in time to bring himself to windward and within easy hailing distance of the *Robert Fulton*. Otherwise, he had no means of communicating with her. Signal lockers were rarely found outside the navy, in those days, and, if there had ever

been such a thing aboard the *Brotherly Love,* the pirates had cleared it out. Upton had to make his choice and make it quickly. Either he must give up this chance of obtaining food and water, or else watch drowning men go down before his eyes.

"Back the main yard!" he shouted. "Mr. Jackson, take the gig through that pass in the reef and do your best to save those poor wretches yonder. Lively, sir; there may be sharks about!"

There were. The gig sped fast but the black fins were coming faster. Swimmer after swimmer was snatched down, until all were gone. The only survivor that Upton could see through his telescope was a little yellow man who clung like an ape to the upturned keel of the largest fragment of the shattered longboat.

Yet when the gig returned to the *Brotherly Love,* it brought back not one passenger but three. Beside the venomous looking little yellow man sat a muscular black giant wearing white cotton drawers and diamond earrings, and a gaunt, hawk-nosed Spaniard, who kept twirling his great mustachios with unshakable pride.

His melancholy black eyes and Upton's smiling gray ones lit with mutual recognition as the Spaniard came aboard.

"*Buenos dias, Señor Teniente.* It is four years since we parted at New Orleans, after you had brought us north from Jean Lafitte's town on the Isla Galvez."

"I haven't forgotten you, Gasparilla. And if here aren't Big Congo and the Scorpion. I saw him tucking his toes up out of harm's way, but how did you and Congo escape the sharks?"

"If the lieutenant will but trouble himself to examine the knives his seamen have taken from us," replied Gasparilla proudly, "he will see that not only the blood of Christians has been shed to-day."

"Dived down and slashed the shark's belly open as he turned over to nab you, eh?" said Upton, after a glance at the slimy, clotted blades. "Good sense, good swimming and darned good pluck! Now what were you and your gang doing aboard the *Robert Fulton,* and how on earth did you ever get there? You might as well tell me here and now, since you've let her crew and passengers get away alive."

"That is true," admitted Gasparilla regret-

fully. "My scheme was of a most beautiful simplicity. Knowing her appointed time, and perceiving the lights of the steamer coming up from the southward as the night drew to its close, we placed ourselves where the sunrise would reveal us, a forlorn and shipwrecked crew.

"Only a few of us were visible to those aboard the steamer. Some lay sprawled out stiffly like dying men. Others were rowing, but so feebly that the wind and tide kept driving us down upon those rocks a-lee. At the sight of the steamer, we made signals of distress, nor did we make them in vain.

"You frown, *Señor Teniente,* but it was the only way. That demon-driven monstrosity of a fire-ship that rolls upon two wheels like a *volante* is so fast that no honest sailing vessel can overhaul her. For us, however, she stopped and lowered her lee gangway. No sooner had we made fast our painter than I called upon those who had been crouching on the bottom boards to throw off the canvas that concealed them and follow us aboard.

"In a moment we had gained her deck and were holding her people helpless before the muzzles of our pistols. Summoning her cap-

tain, I commanded him to fetch from the strong room the hundred thousand dollars, *oro Americano,* that he had on board, consigned to merchants in *Nueva York.*

"How did you know or suspect that there was any such sum of gold aboard the *Robert Fulton?*" demanded Upton.

Time and again the Caribbean pirates had shown a mysterious foreknowledge of specie shipments. It was widely believed that they had a system of secret agents working for them in various American ports. But no such spies had ever been detected.

"How did you know, Gasparilla?"

"A wise man knows more than he tells, *Señor Teniente.* Had I been in error, it would have been a calamity indeed for the captain and others of the *Roberto Fultón.* Very wisely, he ordered the strong room to be opened and the little kegs to be hoisted out on deck. They were heavy, but our boat was large enough to have held them all.

"I had warned my men beforehand, *Señor Teniente,* that this treasure was to suffice us, and that there must be no plundering or molesting the passengers, lest by dividing our scanty

numbers we be overwhelmed. Knowing me, they obeyed.

"The crew of the steamer, menaced by our pistols, soon were hoisting the gold on deck, and rigging a yard tackle whereby to lower it overside into our longboat. As each keg was brought up, I had the carpenter remove its head under my eye, that I might make certain of the contents.

"After I had examined the first three kegs, and found them full of good gold eagles, packed in sawdust, I commanded Chombo Gongora to perform his appointed task. This Gongora had once been employed upon the *Roberto Fultón* to throw large sticks of wood upon the fires that are kept burning beneath the two great copper cauldrons in her hold. He had thereby acquired a most intimate knowledge of her machinery. Gongora boasted that, with a few blows of a sledge hammer on certain vital parts, he could totally disable the steamer's engines.

"Supported by five well-armed men to protect him while below, Chombo Gongora valiantly descended the hatchway leading to the machines and cauldrons. Scarcely had he quit

the deck, when the cry was raised that a warship was coming about the point."

Delicately emphasizing the word " warship ", Gasparilla stared pointedly at the empty broadside ports and dummy bow chasers of the *Brotherly Love.*

" Go on," commanded Upton. " What happened next? "

" Who can tell? All was at once confusion aboard the *Roberto Fultón.* A Yankee sailor on the foreyard cut away the whip line he had just bent, and prevented our lowering overside the kegs of gold. Belaying pins and other missiles were thrown, to which we replied with pistol balls. At the same time, a strange tumult began below.

" Much steam rose suddenly out of the hatchway of the machines. Forth from the hot cloud sprang Chombo Gongora and his five companions, scalded and screaming. They bounded to the rail and cast themselves headlong into the sea. No sooner had these vile cowards risen to the surface after their dive than they climbed into the longboat and would have cast off and abandoned the rest of us, had we not rushed down the gangway in time to embark ourselves.

"Gongora explained that in some diabolical manner, hot water and steam had been cast upon them from one of the cauldrons. After the loss of so vast a quantity of steam, so he declared, the *Roberto Fultón* would be unable to proceed for many hours.

"But hardly had he spoken those lying words when we saw the accursed wheels begin to revolve. What followed, the *Señor Teniente* has himself beheld."

CHAPTER V: *Complications at Havana*

"NOT a sail in sight, Mr. Jackson, and instead of stores, we've shipped three more hearty appetites. Guess it's just as well for the *Robert Fulton* that we fell in with her; but we can't fetch Jamaica now without taking on more supplies somewhere."

"How about putting into that new settlement on Cayo Hueso?" suggested the master's mate.

"Too new and too small," decided Upton. "Nothing much to be had at Key West, as they call it now, but fleas and fever, from what I've heard of the place. Besides, it would take us pretty nearly as long to beat up there against this wind as it would to sail with it abeam to Havana. Square away, Mr. Jackson, and see to it that these three greasy pirates work their passage."

"I'll render the grease out of 'em, sir," promised Essex Jackson. "Jones, take them evil-smelling sons o' Belial for'ard, and begin by

havin' 'em give each other a good old-fashioned sand-and-canvas bath. Then set 'em to work."

Old Barbary Jones had no tenderness toward pirates, for he had been captured in the *Philadelphia* and slaved for two years as a prisoner in Tripoli. Under his baleful eye, José Gasparilla, the Scorpion and Big Congo did as they were ordered and did it hard.

Vowing unspeakable vengeance under his breath, Gasparilla reflected bitterly that the United States Navy was not what it used to be. The last time that he had been its prisoner, he had snored the idle hours away on the floor of the brig, between hearty meals of beef and beans. He whispered savagely, and his friends agreed with him, that this was a very inferior specimen of a Yankee man-o'-war.

Next morning, as they holystoned the deck, the three buccaneers did not fail to notice that the dummy guns had been stowed away and the pennant struck. By noon, they had counted the prize crew and realized how scurvily by a sham display of force, they and their dead companions had been tricked out of the great treasure they had captured. In the afternoon Big Congo,

who had been sent aloft to slush down the mainmast, brought the good news that they were approaching Havana where they had so many friends.

Lieutenant Upton also was looking for friends, as the *Brotherly Love* passed in between La Punta and Morro Castle. To his disappointment, there was no other American vessel in port. He was glad to see a very smart looking British frigate, as the relations between the West India Squadrons of the two navies were at that time extremely cordial.

Just then, however, he had to deal with Spanish officials who seemed to regard all American naval activities in Cuban waters as an uncalled-for intrusion into Spain's domestic affairs. The plump, prosperous-looking little collector of the port, and the tall, sickly, unshaven port doctor, who followed him aboard from the Customs House boat, both looked from Upton's epaulettes to the unpennanted main truck and back again, with quickly kindled suspicion.

"What strange species of vessel is this, Señor?" frowned the collector. "Is she of the navy or the merchant marine?"

"If the *caballeros* will do me the honor to

descend to my poor cabin," replied Upton urbanely, "all will be made clear."

Smiling expectantly, the fat *aduanero* waddled down the companionway, with the medical officer sticking close to his heels. Over the bumpers of claret that Upton poured from a tin pannikin, the visitors looked at the slashed upholstery, the shattered paneling, and the other evidences of recent violence.

"You appear to have had an adventurous voyage, Señor," observed the collector.

"Fairly so," admitted Upton, as he began a succinct account of what had happened.

The two officials listened with the languid courtesy that was theirs by birthright, but with widely different mannerisms. The port doctor planted both elbows on the cabin table, rested his bristling chin on his interlaced, black-nailed fingers, and stared unswervingly at Upton with the eyes of a village idiot dying of melancholia.

The collector, on the contrary, was sitting up as straight as possible for one so chubby, his porcine little eyes twinkling shrewdly, and a knowing smile on his moist red lips. Looking at the pair, Upton could not decide which he disliked the most. The sight of them became confused in

his mind with the foul reek of the filthy harbor and unwashed city which old-time skippers used to swear they could smell a league to seaward in an offshore wind. Fervidly he prayed that he might soon be back on clean blue water.

Upton, pausing to recollect a Spanish phrase, gave the impression that he had finished, before he had reached the point of his encounter with the *Robert Fulton.*

"Most interesting, *Señor Teniente,*" said the collector, as he drained his third tin cupful of claret and settled down to business. "Now might I be permitted to see your manifest, clearance papers and the other customary documents?"

"There are no ship's papers, *Señor Aduanero,*" repeated Upton patiently. "As I have said before, they were all carried off or destroyed by the Black Bloodhound. I do not even know who is the owner of this vessel, though her home port appears to be Philadelphia."

"But our laws demand documentary evidence," persisted the Spaniard. "Where are the lieutenant's orders from his captain to take possession of this ship?"

"Verbal."

The collector frowned portentously.

"At least, the Señor can show us his commission as an officer in the navy of the United States."

"My commission, sir, is in my cabin aboard the *Constellation*. The emblem of my authority is my uniform."

"The costume is highly becoming," purred the collector, as with a mighty effort he crossed one plump knee over the other. "Nevertheless, I must insist upon more cogent evidence."

Very idly and casually, he began to run the tip of his forefinger around the raised edges of some of the coins that were plainly revealing their outline through the straining fabric over his well-lined breeches pocket.

"Evidence of a convincing nature," he hinted. "Well rounded and ringing true."

"I understand," said Upton with equal blandness. "But I can only repeat that the Black Bloodhound has left nothing of the kind behind him."

"What, no evidence to show that you are in lawful possession of this ship?" said the collector with a deepening of his frown. "Must I then assume that—"

He jumped and squeaked at the unexpected sound of a deep agonized groan.

"All the saints! Who's that?"

"The man I told you of, who was tortured by the pirates," explained Upton. "Will the *caballeros* trouble themselves to see him?"

The port doctor nodded and stepped inside, his dull eyes lit with professional interest. The collector looked for the first time in his snugly sheltered life into a flayed man's living face. It sent him staggering back to the table, where he drained the pannikin of claret at one gulp.

Inside the stateroom, Upton and the port doctor began changing the patient's bandages and dressing his partly healed wounds. The physician showed approval of the naval officer's treatment.

"The proper remedies and well applied," he nodded.

"Ah, you've seen such cases before, then?"

"Many times, *Señor Teniente.*"

"You would, at this port," said Upton, bitterly, as he remembered how until recently many American and English merchant ships had been overhauled and plundered in broad daylight

and within sight of Morro Castle by armed craft issuing from Havana harbor.

"It is your own countrymen who use each other so, Señor," murmured the doctor reproachfully.

Such was the invariable response of every Spaniard, in or out of office, to any one who complained of Cuban piracy. Yet time and again, American seamen and passengers had recognized the identical sloop or schooner, with the same crew of ruffians that had pillaged them less than a week before, now unarmed and openly plying as a fisherman or coaster.

Through the open cabin deadlight, Upton could hear the jabber of broken English and mongrel Spanish from the boatmen who had pulled alongside the *Brotherly Love,* now riding in her assigned berth, to peddle shore truck to his crew. He wondered how many of those grinning upturned faces he would spot for old professional acquaintances when he went topsides.

In silence, he and the port doctor finished rebandaging the patient, who neither winced nor moaned, after the first, but looked at them with

the same perplexed, appealing look as an injured animal.

"Will he recover, Doctor?"

"As to his body, soon. His wounds, though many and painful, are but on the surface and are healing fast. But as to his mind — who can tell?"

"What do you prescribe?"

"More nourishing food, continued rest and good care. The outcome is as God gives. Medicine cannot help a brain that has broken, as I saw many another break at the siege of Saragossa, under the strain of pain and horror. Yet I also have seen —"

At this point came an interruption from without.

"Come out o' the cabin, you pirate!" bawled the scandalized voice of Barbary Jones. "Lay for'rard, afore I come in thar and start heavin' ye out by handfuls, dash-dot yer scurvy soul!"

"Save me, *Señor Aduanero!*" implored some one in Spanish. "Save me from these unchristian savages of the sea."

Upton found a most effective tableau staged at the foot of the cabin table. José Gasparilla,

that hard-fighting pirate and knifer of sharks, was kneeling at the feet of the fat little collector, who with one arm thrown protectingly about the suppliant's neck, stood regarding Upton with righteous indignation.

On deck, just forward of the mainmast and the sacred limits of the quarter-deck, Barbary Jones was swearing bass, to Gasparilla's tenor and the collector's treble, in a spirited trio suddenly silenced by Upton.

"Jones, come here," he commanded.

Jones came, preceded by a brandy breath that made his officer sniff and demand, "Where did you get the price of that bottle of *aguardiente?*"

"They — they was passin' it up free, sir, like the bumboatmen so often does at the beginnin', sir."

"How long has this prisoner been in the cabin?"

"Just a minute, sir," vowed Jones.

"Ten minutes, more likely," rasped Upton, as he observed the brass-rag still clutched in Gasparilla's right hand and remembered how he had noticed the pirate busily rubbing the brasswork let into the ornate fife rail of the mainmast.

Stepping to the foot of the companionway, Upton looked up and saw, just as he had expected, the bright work at the head of the companionway gleaming newly burnished in the sun.

Obviously, Gasparilla had been working there and listening to every word spoken in the cabin until he had slipped down to tell his troubles to the collector while Upton and the doctor were in the stateroom.

"Jones, put this man and the other two prisoners into the cable tier, and stand sentry over them yourself until further orders."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Barbary reached for the scruff of Gasparilla's neck. But Gasparilla clasped both his arms about the collector's silken calves, while he invoked the protection of God and King Ferdinand.

"This man and his companion are Spanish subjects," declared the collector sonorously. "In the King's name, I demand their immediate release!"

"These men are notorious pirates," retorted Upton. "Caught in the very act of plundering an American vessel off Cape Antonio. They

are my prisoners and shall remain my prisoners until they go to stand their trial in a United States court."

"They are peaceful fishermen, Señor, who were clumsily run down by the incompetent captain of that steamboat," contradicted the collector, who had evidently been hearing a good deal from Gasparilla. "Can you deny that you picked them up within three miles of our coast, in Spanish territorial waters? Can you deny that only the day before yesterday you disguised this ship of yours as a man-of-war, armed with two large guns, while to-day you declare her to be a merchantman? Can you produce the slightest evidence that you are her lawful commander?"

"The only sort of evidence that would convince the *Señor Aduanero,*" repeated Upton, "has already been removed by the Black Bloodhound."

"Bah! Always the so-mysterious Black Bloodhound. Who are you, *Señor Americano,* to so glibly accuse other men of piracy? How do I know that you are not the Black Bloodhound himself?"

"May your excellency go with God," said

Upton, very softly uttering the customary formula of dismissal.

"I go!" shrieked the collector, dancing out of Gasparilla's grip. "I go, but you remain! Dare not to break out anchor or make sail. Any attempt at an unauthorized departure will be the signal for a salvo of cannon balls from El Morro and our other fortresses. I go, but soon I will return with an ample force to take possession of this ship in the King's name. Resist me at your peril!"

"Attempt it at your peril," retorted Upton, as he escorted the collector and port doctor on deck. "I warn you, sir, that this is an American ship, in the custody of a United States naval prize crew. If you have any charges or complaints, go make them through the proper channels. In the meanwhile, gentlemen, I have the honor to wish you a very good afternoon."

Ignoring Upton's valedictory, to which the port doctor was courteously replying, the collector shouted from the top of the gangway to the boatmen swarming alongside the *Brotherly Love*.

"Shove off! Begone! It is forbidden to

hold intercourse with this vessel and her crew! Moreover —" he paused to let the real reason sink in —" they have no money."

Away went the Customs House galley. Away went the shore boats, with all their delicious corgoes of new-baked bread, fresh fruit, vegetables, live poultry and sugar-cane rum. Except for the usual free samples of *aguardiente,* hardly an article had changed hands.

One scrawny fowl had somehow found its way aboard. This Upton ordered to be made into broth for the convalescent in the cabin.

" Doctor says the patient needs more nourishment," meditated the Yankee lieutenant, as he walked the poop and watched for further developments. " Guess the rest of us will be in the same fix pretty soon ourselves, if that little scalawag has the sense to blockade us instead of trying to lay us aboard. Hope he kicks up enough fuss ashore to rouse our consul."

Upton had read in his home town paper, during his last shore leave in the summer of 1823, that a United States Consulate was about to be established at Havana. He considered going ashore in his gig to consult the consul. But in view of the increasing activity on and about the

Customs House quay, he decided to stick by his ship.

Presently Upton saw an imposing flotilla of four large galleys, each bearing a bronze howitzer in the bows and bristling with muskets aft, come pulling across the harbor in line abreast. Determined not to be overridden, but if possible to maneuver the other side into firing the first shot, Upton ordered his own crew under arms.

To his great relief, the galleys suddenly backed water and lay on their oars, as they were on the point of passing a Spanish gunboat that was riding at anchor halfway between the Customs House and the *Brotherly Love.* The sound of an animated discussion came faintly over the water, but the distance was too great for Upton to distinguish any words.

The outcome, however, was plain. The customs galleys swung round and pulled back to their quay, while the gunboat cleared for action and slipped her cable.

She was schooner-rigged, and the trimmest, cleanest little craft that Upton had ever seen under the Spanish naval ensign. Her white paint was actually white; her port lids were emerald green, in harmony with her name: *La*

Isla Esmeralda. Those gay port lids were now smartly triced up and long sweeps thrust out. Impelled by these and without unfurling her canvas to the fitful harbor breeze, the gunboat took up a raking position astern of the *Brotherly Love,* just out of musket shot.

"That fellow knows his business, Mr. Jackson," said Upton, as the sweeps were shipped and anchors let go bow and stern. "Knows his manners too. I expected he'd run out his guns and bring his pivot to bear, but he's closed his ports. Instead of showing his teeth and summoning us to send a boat aboard, here he comes himself in his gig, as polite as you please."

An exceedingly handsome specimen of a Spanish naval lieutenant, resplendently uniformed, swaggered aboard the *Brotherly Love* and glowered disapprovingly at her commander out of piercing black eyes beneath prodigiously long black lashes.

"And what manner av man are you?" he demanded with crushing scorn, "that ye did not shtep on that slimy son av a hoptoad, the collector, when ye had the chance, and him the crawling scandal av the harbor side?"

Utterly taken back, the American could find

no word to say for a long five seconds. Then his drooping jaw snapped up into a grin.

"Green port lids!" he chuckled. "*Isla Esmeralda.* I might have guessed it!"

"Ye might," conceded the other. "Permit me to inthrajuice meself: Don Patricio Dugan, commanding his Most Catholic Majesty's gunboat *Emerald Isle.*"

"I'm Upton of the *Constellation.* Come below and have a glass — I mean a tin cup — of wine."

Sipping the claret and puffing Don Patricio's notable Havanas, the two most amicably discussed the situation.

"Misther Upton," asked the Irishman, after he had heard the Yankee's story, "have ye ever, in the course av yer professional exparience, shtudied the contours av a double-headed shot? Well, 'tis the mortal likeness av the colonial government av Cuba. Wan head is the Governor General, with the sword in his fist, and the other is the Intendent, with his fingers clenched fast on the purse strings.

"Don Eufemio Gonzales, the collector, better known as *El Zapo,* the Toad, is av course under the Intendencia. By presumin' to attempt

to seize yer ship, he was shteppin' on our side av the fence, as well I let him know. But ye must admit, Misther Upton, that the signs av violence and lack av papers aboard this misnamed packet av yours are enough to throw anny Spanish official into a whirlin' vertigo.

"Havin' been a Yankee privateersman wance, back in the days av 1812, I know a prize crew and an officer av the States navy on sight. But the Dons are the grand people for formality. What manner av means can ye devise now for the satisfying av them, Misther Upton?"

"Send a man ashore with a note to the American consul."

"There's no Yankee consul in Havana — nor anny other kind, aither."

"But I understood that President Monroe was about to appoint one, back in 1823," said Upton.

"He was that. But Don Francisco Vives, the Governor General av Cuba, had harsh words to say about Misther Monroe's cilibrated Docthrine, and his recognition av Simon Bolivar and his wild rapparee raypublics. He tould Misther Monroe to take his Docthrine and his consuls to a hotter place than Havana — puttin'

it diplomatically, av course. A grand way av expressin' himself has Don Francisco, bein' wan av the rale ould-time aristocracy av Spain. He's the man ye'll have to do business with in the end, Misther Upton."

"I've got to do some business with him, or somebody else, right now," declared Upton, rising and pacing indignantly up and down the cabin. "I've put into this supposedly friendly port with barely enough food and water aboard to last me another twenty-four hours. I haven't a copper cent, but the United States Treasury will either honor my drafts or stop them out of my pay, so whoever sells me stores will run no risk of not being paid. Isn't that so, Don Patricio?"

"It is so, Misther Upton."

"Then will you please either lift the embargo which the collector has had the impudence to clap on the shore boats, or else put me in touch with some reliable ship chandler in town?"

"The first is beyant me powers," said the Irishman regretfully, "the matter havin' been already rayferred to higher authority to determine who has the say-so, shore boats bein' under

control av the Intendencia, foreign affairs belongin' to the Governor General. By the time both sides quit wranglin', ye'll be starved entirely. Or else ye'll let them seize the ship and run up a big bill av costs for investigatin' her status — which is what they're drivin' at anny-way. Don't I know them?"

"You certainly seem to," admired Upton. "Now, how about my buying stores on credit ashore?"

"Who'd dare give ye credit until ye've proved yer identity?" Don Patricio asked shrewdly. "And since ye must ate in the meantime, there's just wan lad I know, an honest *contrabandista* who'll do the business for ye. Let me say the word, and a barge load av elegant stores will be alongside this night, in the dark av the moon. Since ye've no ready money and he niver heard av credit, just pay him in dry goods and Yankee notions out av the cargo."

"Great Scott, man, I can't do that sort of thing!"

"And why not? Sure, who's to know that the goods weren't among the plunder the Black Bloodhound made off with betimes? It's savin' the owners' money ye would be, for 'twould cost

them far dearer if iver they fall into the hands av the Spanish courts here, I'm tellin' ye."

"I don't doubt it in the least," admitted Upton. "And I know that you mean it kindly, Don Patricio. But I'm not doing business that way."

"And ye're not givin' up the ship, nor the three prisoners aither?"

"Not a rope yarn nor a hair of their heads."

"I might have known ye wouldn't, ye stiff-necked Yank," sighed Don Patricio reproachfully. "And here I am, expectin' to be sent aboard av ye be to-morrow mornin' at latest with an order for their release. Sure, we niver take anny prisoners. It's too much trouble entirely."

"You'd have picked up those three men, if you'd been in my place, and you know it. Now will you, as his Excellency's representative, take a note from me to the Governor General?"

"Write it now and I'll hand it to him meself when I go to the Palacio this very night," promised Don Patricio. "But I warn ye, ould Don Francisco Vives loves the Yankees as I love the English — may the hereafter be hot for thim!"

CHAPTER VI: *The Other Kind of a Britisher*

COOLER blew the afternoon breeze from off the sea, lower sank the sun behind the castle-crowned hill of El Principe, silhouetting the stark black outline of the towered and battlemented bastions against the flaming splendor of the sunset. Below were open savannas and market gardens, with many thatched huts and a few large villas, each half-hidden in its grove of royal palms.

Down by the shore, sharply cut off from the open country, stood the old walled city, its gray church towers rising above the mass of flat-roofed houses huddled tight inside the crumbling but still unbroken ramparts that guarded this last great citadel of Old World absolutism left in the awakening New World.

Across the entrance channel, the rays of the setting sun touched and glorified the endless, weathered, steeply sloping walls and frowning batteries of Cabanas and El Morro, transforming the cruel old fortress prisons into fairy

palaces. Round the whole outer zone of strongholds, from seaward to landward and back again: El Morro, Cabanas, and San Diego, Atares Castle, El Principe, San Nazario, Santa Clara, and Castillo de la Punta, thundered the guns and sang the bugles, as the flags came down and the day was done.

They lowered the ensign on the *Brotherly Love* and piped all hands to three bites and a nibble of salt horse and hardtack. After that, there was nothing to do but look wistfully at the lights in town and think of the bully time that all the other sailors in port were having ashore.

"Remember the big liberty party we saw shovin' off from that King's ship yonder, when we let go our mudhook?" asked Thirsty Jim Smiley of the world at large. "Pay in their pockets, to set the Spanish wine a-flowin' and the Creole girls a-dancin' to the fiddles and guitars. And here we be, starvin' to death within sight of plenty! And now—"

"Gig away!" boomed the imperative voice of Essex Jackson.

"And now," finished Smiley, who pulled stroke in that boat, "I'm goin' ashore with nothin' but a ten-dollar thirst."

But Lieutenant Upton, for whom the gig had been ordered away, was not going ashore just then. Taking the yoke lines, he steered for the British frigate. She must recently have come out from England, he said to himself, for he knew all three of her veteran consorts on the station so well that he could have recognized any one of them instantly by the cut of her top-sails or the taste of the wardroom port.

If this were only the old *Dartmouth,* now, or the little *Hyperion* or the *Seringapatam!* How mercilessly the fever-shaken but ever cheery captains and officers of any one of those three happy ships would have chaffed him about his predicament, and then how unstintedly they would have helped him out of it. Every ship takes its tone from the skipper, and now everything depended on what sort of a Britisher was the captain of this newly arrived frigate.

It was too dark for him to make out her name as he came alongside. Challenged by the sentry at the gangway, Upton gave his name and rank and was promptly invited to "Come aboard, sir."

Silken side ropes — unheard-of luxuries on a fifth rate — caressed his palms as he mounted

to a spar deck whiter than scraped bone. Facing aft to salute the quarter-deck, Upton cast a professional eye along the after division of the starboard battery. The moon had not yet risen and only the glow of candlelight from the open cabin doors and windows, and the feeble gleam of two or three hanging battle lanterns lit the deck. But every ray of light that probed the thick darkness under the starboard bulwarks was reflected and multiplied as if by a jeweler's shop window. The long black barrel of an eighteen-pounder, touched by starlight and lantern gleam, shone like polished jet from breech to tompion. Here a cap square, yonder a cascabel, glinted darkly. Polished solid shot stood glittering in a copper rack that glowed like a wedding ring. The very hand spikes and iron stanchions had been rubbed to a gloss; the wooden gun carriages and sponge staffs were scoured to whiteness.

"Spit and polish!" mentally snorted the Yankee man-o'-warsman, who had helped knock all the prettiness out of just such another dandified ship's battery in the spring of 1813. "Mighty seldom these fancy guns are ever dirtied by firing."

Any real sailor can sense the tone and feeling of a ship's company by the time he has been five minutes aboard. Less than that was long enough to make Upton thank the Lord devoutly that he was not serving aboard H. M. S. *Flash,* 36. She was impeccably smart, and the old naval saying is that a taut ship is a happy ship. But the *Flash* was overtaut, and not at all happy.

Upton could feel this in the restrained and cautious courtesy with which her first lieutenant listened to his story. Mr.— ah — Upton was hoping to find an acquaintance of his aboard? Do any of you gentlemen know this American gentleman? Prompt and polite denials came from all the other cocked hats on the quarter-deck.

Perhaps Mr.— ah — Upton would recognize the names of some of the other gentlemen now below or ashore. Forthwith, the first luff called the roll of the frigate's commissioned officers, from Captain Sir Maurice FitzMaurice down to the youngest middy.

"I'm sorry, sir, but I'm afraid they're all strangers to me," confessed the American.

"Then I'm afraid that we can do nothing more for you, Mr.— ah — Upton," regretted

the first luff. "Unless you care to wait until the captain returns aboard. We are expecting him at any moment."

Under those circumstances and for the sake of his own crew, Upton remained, though he felt anything but welcome. There was no suggestion of his stepping below for a glass of wine, or anything else to indicate that this deck load of frozen figureheads belonged to the same great service as the jovial, hard-drinking, hard-fighting wardroom crowd in the *Dartmouth, Hyperion,* or *Seringapatam.* Standing rigidly upright and maintaining the Arctic silence that seemed to be the correct thing aboard the *Flash,* Upton profanely prayed that if he ever again set foot in this hand-painted iceberg, it might be at the head of a boarding party. Luckily, the silence was soon broken by the gangway sentinel's challenging hail.

"Boat ahoy! What boat is that?"

"The captain's gig."

Very handsomely they piped the side, as Captain Sir Maurice FitzMaurice came aboard. Without bothering to acknowledge any courtesies, and looking distinctly annoyed, he spoke to his first lieutenant.

"Have every member of my gig's crew put in irons, Mr. Mackiver. I'll have them soundly flogged in the morning. The fellows kept me waiting two minutes at the quay."

Following by his attendant train, the captain made a stately progress aft to where Upton was waiting expectantly on the quarter-deck.

"There is an American officer come aboard, sir," said the first luff deprecatingly.

"Humph! What's he want?" demanded Sir Maurice FitzMaurice.

Instead of introducing Upton and leaving it to him to tell his own story, the first luff, who knew his own skipper, gave him a succinct and very fair version of what the visitor had said.

"I'll see him, here and now," conceded Sir Maurice, stepping into the lane of light from the open door of his cabin. "Have my dinner served up at once," he called to some one inside.

A noble savor of green turtle soup almost brought tears to Upton's eyes as he stepped aft for the interview. After five days on short rations of cold junk and hardtack, he had the appetite of a raging wolf pack.

"If His Arrogance unbends and invites me to dinner," he told himself, "I'll swarm up his legs and kiss him."

Some such maneuver would have been necessary, for Upton was a little man, while Sir Maurice was long-sparred. He had the height and nose of the Duke of Wellington, but the rest of him looked like Lord Byron. With pride enough for both and something over, he smiled condescendingly at the homely little person in a weathered uniform made by the second-best tailor in Kennebunkport.

"You are an American?"

"Yes, sir."

"Indeed," drawled Sir Maurice FitzMaurice. "Pray, sir, were you at the Bladensburg Races?"

Bladensburg! The name brought vivid memories to Upton of the rear-guard action fought by Commodore Barney's handful of seamen and marines on that lost battlefield. Again he saw his gun crew fighting with clubbed rammers and handspikes and felt his sword blade clash with a British bayonet, until another one ran him through the thigh. There had been racing to the rear at Bladensburg by the raw re-

cruits and green militiamen, but not by the leathernecks and the seamen.

For an Englishman to ask him whether he had been at the "Bladensburg Races" was equivalent to a slap in the face. Stunned by the callous brutality of this gratuitous public insult, Upton instinctively clenched his fists. It took every atom of self-control he possessed to keep from smashing an uppercut into that sneering, insolent smile. But you cannot hit the captain of a King's ship on his own quarter-deck.

Holding himself in, Upton heard some one begin to speak, biting out each word in a tense voice which he dimly recognized as his own.

"I *was* at the Battle of Bladensburg. But — you — were — *not,* sir."

Fumbling and dropping his insolent smile, Sir Maurice FitzMaurice flushed as scarlet as the coat of the marine sentry at the cabin door, who was listening with straining ears. So were the stewards within and the semicircle of officers on the quarter-deck. They stood in a paralyzed silence, broken at last by Sir Maurice's angry ejaculation.

"How the deuce — what in blazes d'ye mean, sir?"

"Ask any one who was there — or in any other battle," answered Upton coldly. "Good night, sir."

He saluted, turned his back on Sir Maurice FitzMaurice, strode to the gangway, went overside, embarked and had shoved off before the captain of the *Flash* again found coherent speech.

"Curse the fellow's impudence! What the deuce was he driving at, Mr. Mackiver?"

"I have no idea, sir," declared the first luff, very promptly. "I rather fancy, sir, it was Mr. Brown —"

"Ah, yes, Mr. Brown," snapped Sir Maurice FitzMaurice. "You're the one who told us you were at Bladensburg."

"Not exactly, sir," answered a gray-haired junior lieutenant, limping into the bar of light. "At that time, I was with the other landing party, from the *Menelaus,* when the Maryland militia killed Sir Peter Parker and drove us back to our boats, sir."

"At least, Mr. Brown, you were with the Chesapeake fleet then, for you told us how, whenever you fell in with a troublesome Yankee and wished to be rid of him, you'd ask him

whether he had been at the Bladensburg Races."

"So we did sometimes, Sir Maurice. But we never put it that way to any of their naval people, sir."

"And why not, pray?"

"Because they did none of the racing, and all of the fighting that was done on their side at Bladensburg," explained Lieutenant Brown. "Their soldiers ran like rabbits, but the Yankee sailors and marines stood to their guns like men, sir."

"Humph!" snorted Sir Maurice Fitz-Maurice and went in to his dinner.

CHAPTER VII: *A Question of Color*

Oh, 'tis of a fine frigate, the *Flash* is her name,
All in the West Indies she has a great fame,
For cruel bad usage of ev'ry degree.
Like slaves in a galley we plough the salt sea.

AT the sound of this dolorous foc'sle ditty, re-echoing out of a waterfront dive full of British bluejackets on liberty, Upton smiled for the first time since sundown. He had come directly ashore after leaving the *Flash,* hunted up a pawnshop and raised thirty pesos on his watch. Investing this in jerked beef, venerable sea biscuit and evil smelling salt fish at a ship chandler's, he had sent these stores aboard in his gig, which was to return for him at ten o'clock.

It was now half-past nine by the cathedral clock, and so far his real mission ashore had been an utter failure. He had tramped the city without finding any shipping agent who had ever heard of the *Brotherly Love* of Philadelphia, or any American resident who was either at his

lodgings or place of business, or any clerk, porter, watchman, doorkeeper or other underling who seemed to know any word of his own language except the eternal *mañana.*

"To-morrow it is," decided Upton. "I've learned one thing about Havana, and that is that nobody works or sleeps nights in this town. Those lads inside here are certainly having a merry time singing about their misery."

Now at four in the morning our work does begin,
In our 'tween decks and cockpit a bucket might swim,
Our fore and main topmen so loudly do bawl,
For sand and for holystones both great and small.

Our decks being washed down and swabbed up quite dry,
It's "Lash up your hammocks!" our bosun does cry;
Seven turns with your lashing so equal must show,
And all of one size through the hoop they must go.

Sir Maurice FitzMaurice, you knows him quite well,
He comes upon deck and he cuts a great swell;

It's damn your eyes there, and it's damn your
eyes here,
And straight to the gangway he takes a broad
sheer.

Our di-vision officer next makes his rounds —

"Hard luck for you, my lads, if he comes around just now," thought Upton, as he turned up into the Calle Obispo. "And here he comes, by thunder!"

A short, thick-set British naval lieutenant was limping jerkily down from the Plaza de Armas toward the waterfront, hitching and dragging his left foot over the clumsy cobblestones. Having had his fill of the *Flash's* afterguard for that evening, Upton curtly acknowledged the other's salute, and was passing by when the Englishman lurched directly into his path and stopped him.

"Look here," he stammered. "I'd like — I say — you know —"

He was obviously the sort of Britisher to whom self-expression comes hard. But the tone of his voice revealed how sorry and disgusted he was at what had happened. That and the

long white sword scar across one grizzled temple warmed Upton's heart.

"Thanks," he said simply, as they wrung each other's hand. "Thanks, I don't care if I do."

"Right!" said the Englishman, taking his arm and warping him around with another lurch in through the open arcaded front of a better class eating-house. "I know this place. They do you very well here. Hi there, *muchacho! Dos cangrejos y vino tinto!*"

An awkward pause followed, after they had seated themselves at a table near the street and before the waiter returned.

"I can't say anything, of course," murmured the Britisher, blinking benevolently at the ceiling. "But you've said what we'd all like to say, and said it very neatly indeed. He gave himself away about Bladensburg. But how did you know that he's never seen any active service whatever?"

"Too much swank and swagger," answered Upton. "Somebody's relative, I suppose?"

"Duke's nephew."

"Well, we have politicians' nephews," confessed the American. "Guess it works out pretty much the same."

"Let's be thankful we're not starving on half pay, like so many poor chaps, these beastly peaceful times," said the Englishman, brightening up as the waiter arrived with the wine and two stupendous crabs. "I'll give you a toast, Mr. Upton. Here's a health to all brave sailors and a plague on all politicians."

"And that's a true word!" endorsed the hearty voice of Don Patricio Dugan, who had arrived at that moment through the arcade. "That's a pledge I'll be proud to be drinking."

The three lieutenants touched and drained their glasses with proper ceremony.

"Won't you draw up and join us, Mr. Dugan?" invited the British officer, with a shade more politeness than cordiality.

"Thank ye, Mr. Brown, but I must be goin' aboard without delay. But if ye'll pardon the intrusion for a minute, I've a word for our Yankee friend.

"I've been to the Palacio and left yer note, but there's no seein' the Governor General this night. Ould Don Francisco has his boardin'-nets triced up and his secretaries fendin' off all visitors. What it's all about, they won't say, but I'm thinkin' it's the Peep o' Day boys."

"And who are they?" asked Upton.

"That's me private and particular translation av *Los Soles y Rayos de Bolivar,* the saycret society that's paid and organized by Simon Bolivar to stir up riot and revolution here in the Iver Faithful Island. Don Fernando's spies must have brought in a grand lot av ividence this time. The best word I could get from anny av thim was that the Governor General might get 'round to lookin' into your matter next week."

"That will give me plenty of time to establish my identity, then," said Upton.

"Well, that's wan way av lookin' at it. And raymimber me honest friend in Regla," Don Patricio reminded him. "And now, I must be shovin' off. Good night, gentlemin."

"Smart chap, that," observed Lieutenant Brown, R. N., as Don Patricio swaggered gracefully out. "But I wouldn't have too much to do with him, if I were you, Mr. Upton."

"Why do you say that?"

"Well, hang it all, a man ought to be serving his own country."

"Isn't that pretty difficult — for an Irishman?" asked Upton.

"Of course, if you want to look at it that

way," admitted the Englishman stiffly. "But Dugan has served under altogether too many flags."

"He told me that he was one of our privateersmen in 1812."

"Quite so. And a Colombian privateersman after that — or possibly both at the same time."

Upton frowned.

"Do you mean to imply that Don Patricio Dugan was one of those double-dealing skippers who carried a Long Tom, a mixed crew, and two sets of papers? One of those pirating privateersmen who could run up either American or South American colors and show letters of marque signed by either President Madison or Don Simon Bolivar, according to whether the merchantman they fell in with was a Britisher or a Spaniard?"

"That's the sort, exactly," agreed Brown. "Though I must confess to having no definite proof of Dugan's ever having played that particular trick. But I know for a fact that he was cruising for Bolivar very soon indeed after the close of the late war between our countries.

"About three years later, in 1818, I ran across him as a captain in the Mexican navy. He was

fighting the Spaniards then, and having all the best of it too. He whipped one cruiser of his own weight and made all the rest look like fools.

"Then very suddenly, he changed sides. He and all his crew were taken into the Spanish service, where they have remained ever since. The Mexican authorities declare that he fled to escape trial for dishonorable practices, and anything that turned their stomachs must have been pretty foul. They're not over-particular, those people."

"Perhaps that's just what Dugan was," suggested Upton.

"Not likely," insisted Brown. "Or he never would have joined them in the first place. Can you imagine any really decent chap going into the Mexican navy, as it is to-day?"

"I can," answered Upton. "For instance, sir, my late commander, Commodore David Porter, is now a Mexican admiral."

"My word!" gasped the astounded Englishman. "Not the Porter who fought so gloriously in the *Essex* at Valparaiso? Why, I thought he was still commanding your West India Squadron operating against the pirates."

"So he was, until lately. He's commanding the Mexican navy now."

"But how on earth —"

"Well, you see it was this way," explained Upton. "You may have noticed that the Dons haven't taken my uniform at its face value, nor gone out of their way to accommodate me, since I put in here. Last year, Lieutenant Platt of the *Beagle* went ashore and paid a visit to Foxardo, a place about two miles from the sea on the east coast of Porto Rico, to inquire about a lot of American dry goods which he'd heard had been deposited there by pirates.

"The alcalde, after recognizing Platt as an officer of the United States Navy, imprisoned him in the calaboose and treated him in a way that was downright shameful. That wasn't the first outrage we'd suffered from the Porto Rican authorities, and when Commodore Porter heard about it, he decided that the time had come to teach the Dons a lesson.

"He landed with two hundred seamen and marines, chased the *soldados* out of the harbor batteries, spiked the guns and then marched inland to the outskirts of Foxardo. The commodore drew up his forces and sent in a flag of

truce with a message for the alcalde and the captain of the port to come out and make a public apology.

"Out they marched, at the head of a sizeable body of troops. Things looked squally for a few minutes and the landing party were beginning to feel downright hopeful and expectant, when suddenly the alcalde caved in. He apologized as handsomely as you could wish, and promised to respect our flag and uniform thereafter.

"Now, sir, supposing Commodore Porter to have been a British officer taking such action under similar provocation, what would your government have done about it?"

"Backed him up, of course," declared Brown. "Do you mean to say that the American Government failed to support Commodore Porter?"

"He was relieved of his command, court-martialed and censured — for carrying out the express wishes of the administration. Naturally, he resigned in disgust and now he's in the Mexican navy, where he can have a chance at the Dons. You can figure out the way this has damped down the spirits of the West India

Squadron and cheered up the pirates. We'd all but finished stamping out piracy around here; now it looks as if we'd got the job to do over again."

"Abominable!" declared the Englishman. "I simply can't conceive how a court composed of his brother officers could have treated him so."

"Well, the commodore never was a favorite with the politicians — and their nephews," explained Upton. "We've got weevils in our sea biscuit, same as yours. I only brought up Porter's case to make you admit that there could be good men in the Mexican navy. Honestly now, have you anything definite against Don Patricio Dugan, except that he's an Irishman who hates King George?"

Brown nodded.

"Can't stand the way he paints his hull and port lids."

"You wouldn't," chuckled Upton, and hummed the opening bar of "The Wearing of the Green."

"Tut, man, I'm not a child!" expostulated the Englishman. "And neither is Pat Dugan. You think he paints his port lids green simply

because he is Irish. I think he does it because he —"

Brown paused for a moment, then resumed very earnestly.

"You understand, Mr. Upton, that this is merely my own private notion, which up to now I have confided to no one. But for reasons which will be apparent presently, I've decided to share it with you — confidentially."

"Thank you, sir; I appreciate that," said the American. "Let's have another bottle —"

He stopped, shamefaced, as he remembered his empty pocket.

"The very thing!" exclaimed Brown, signaling the waiter. "Now, Mr. Upton, let's try a little experiment. Just fix your eyes intently on that quart of red wine — keep staring at it as hard as ever you can, till I give the word. Now close your eyes, please. What color do you see?"

Before Upton's closed eyes floated the hazy vision of a quart bottle, but not a red one.

"Green," he reported.

"Now let's try coming about on the other tack," suggested Brown. "Rest your eyes, then train 'em on that *cacadore* officer's bottle-green

tunic, yonder. Let's see what that turns into, when you drop your eyelids."

"Red, by thunder! Now why on earth is that?"

"Blessed if I know," said Brown frankly. "Rum things, colors. I was shipmate once with a clever chap who knew all manner of things about 'em. He used to do paintings in his watch below. He told me once that the colors of the rainbow were like the guns on a ship, because if you fell away from one you backed straight into its opposite number. For instance: green — red; white —"

"Black," finished Upton.

"Quite so," agreed Brown. "Now suppose you had a ship — or a schooner — painted white and green, and wanted to make her look as unlike her old self as possible — d'ye see?"

Upton saw a startling vision of a topsail schooner scudding away from the *Constellation* by the light of a stormy tropic dawn, her sails set wing-and-wing above a dead black hull checkered with blood-red port lids.

"Look here," he demanded abruptly. "Are you insinuating that Don Patricio is the Black Bloodhound?"

"H-s-sh! Not quite so loud, please," cautioned the Englishman. "Some of these Dons speak English, and Havana is one great whispering gallery. I don't have to remind you that we are speaking confidentially, or suggest what would happen should any word of any such belief of mine reach Dugan's ears."

"He'd call you out," said Upton grimly.

"He would, of course," acknowledged Brown, in his most matter-of-fact tone. "Moreover, he would almost certainly kill me. He is the younger man, a famous swordsman and a crack shot. My weapons, sir, are a ship and her crew. Give us two craft of even rate and I'll match myself against you or Dugan or any other man afloat. I have never yet fought a duel and I hope never to fight one. But of course, sir, I am ready to meet any man who asperses my courage or my honor."

"I've met a good many liars and cowards in my time," replied Upton. "But you don't remind me of any of them the very least bit, Mr. Brown. Only, why do you tell me of these suspicions of yours, when you know that I like Dugan?"

"Because I rather like you myself, Mr. Up-

ton," was Brown's disconcerting answer. "Also, because I want to collar the Black Bloodhound. By the way, did you know that the *Flash* had been sent out from England expressly to run him down?"

It was Upton's turn to shake his head.

"No frigate afloat will ever run that fellow down. The old *Constellation's* a flier, but the last I saw of them the *Black Bloodhound* was simply walking away from her."

"Ah, but your ship was built some time last century. The *Flash* is the very latest model and a perfect marvel, either on or off the wind."

"Even if you have the speed, you've got altogether too much draft," persisted Upton. "The shoals and coral reefs baffle the heavy cruisers every time. It's the boat parties and the light-draft schooners of the Mosquito Flotilla that have had all the fun and the fighting."

"Dare say you're right, so far," acknowledged Brown. "Speaking of schooners, you've seen both the *Black Bloodhound* and the *Isla Esmeralda.* Could they be one and the same vessel, would you say? Or couldn't they?"

"Well, they're both American-built Baltimore clippers, of about two hundred tons burden and

with a pretty strong family resemblance. Rig's a mite different here and there, though."

"But nothing in the way of a difference that couldn't be altered by some of the crew, while the rest were slapping on paint, eh?" persisted Brown. "The *Black Bloodhound* is said to have seventy hands aboard, you know. A crowd like that could do anything to a schooner in a very brief time. And the Cuban coast is simply a network of convenient little coves and harbors where a job like that could be done."

"I'd be the last man to deny it," said Upton, who had been combing out those inlets for the past five years. "So far as the schooners are concerned — and all Baltimore clippers of the same size run pretty much alike — I can't call your theory a crazy one. But how about the crews? The *Isla Esmeralda* is a commissioned cruiser in the Spanish navy. Isn't she manned by regular Spanish bluejackets?"

"Not she!" snorted the Englishman. "You forget that she came straight out of the Mexican navy into the Spanish service with all on board, from Dugan down to the cook. Barring the uniform, his crew are exactly like the *Black Bloodhound's:* sixty or seventy of the worst looking

mixed mongrels I ever saw in my life. Well disciplined, though — I must admit that. So far, you see, it checks up. Schooners alike, crews alike; now for the guns. Have you noticed what metal Dugan carries?"

"No, for he's kept his ports closed, and I've not yet been aboard," replied Upton.

"Neither have I. But I've had a good look at his batteries while he was holding great-gun practise the other day. The *Isla Esmeralda* mounts twelve eighteen-pounder carronades and a long thirty-two on traversing slides."

"By the Great Jehovah!" exclaimed Upton. "That's exactly the reputed armament of the *Black Bloodhound*."

"Three points checked," continued the Britisher stolidly. "Ships, crews, batteries — now for the skippers. What do we know about the *Black Bloodhound* — not the schooner but the man? He's a clever seaman and a desperate fighter. So is Dugan. He's medium-sized and as active as a cat. So's Dugan. He goes closely masked. Why? Because his face is too well known. Dugan is one of the most popular men in all Havana. The Black Bloodhound's eyes — the only feature he can't conceal — are as black

as the rest of him. Now, what color are Dugan's eyes?"

"Black as sloe berries. But that's the regulation tint in these parts," said the American. "Negroes, Indians, and most Spaniards, all have black eyes."

"So they have," Brown admitted. "And of course that's why the Black Bloodhound goes into action wearing kid gloves — imagine cramping one's sword grip and trigger finger with gloves — so that no inch of his skin will betray his race. Have you noticed Dugan's hands? Well, they are pale — actually pale — after at least a dozen years at sea, and in the tropics, at that."

"And then there is the matter of his voice. The Black Bloodhound gives all his commands by dumb show. No one, on all the ships he has boarded, can remember having heard him utter a single word. While no one who ever heard Dugan utter a single word, either in English or Spanish, could fail to notice his atrocious brogue.

"Finally, consider his opportunities. Dugan puts out on cruise every once in so often, supposedly to hunt down pirates. He comes and

goes pretty much as he pleases. Who's to prevent his nipping into any one of those handy little coves and turning his coat?"

"Nobody," agreed Upton, "except himself. And what is Dugan's real self? Well, that's what we've got to find out, just as you've found out and spliced together all this circumstantial evidence against him. You've done a mighty clever job of it, Mr. Brown, and I'm not denying that your rope may hang him yet. But still it may be only a string of coincidences.

"I've seen some of the Black Bloodhound's fiendish work, and I've seen something of Pat Dugan. And I simply can't ram the two ideas down the same bore."

"That's because you like Dugan," insisted Brown. "But that jolly Irish way of his may be all on the surface, like his paint. We must watch and wait for a chance to scratch it and find what lies underneath. And when we do, I'll lay you a month's pay we'll find it is — black and red."

"Done!" cried Upton, shoving back his chair as the cathedral clock began to strike ten. "I'll put my money on the green and white."

CHAPTER VIII: *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness*

THE two lieutenants shook hands on the bet, wished each other good night and separated. Upton went down to the quay at the foot of the Calle Obispo, where he found his gig punctually on hand to take him back aboard.

He settled himself in the stern sheets, took the yoke lines, and gave the routine commands: "Shove off. Let fall. Give way."

Dipping their blades, the crew of the gig gave way with a vim and vigor, a joyous swing and a snappy recover, that was not in the least like the dull, dogged pull with which these same four seamen had rowed him ashore. Then, they had seemed low-spirited and stale. Now, although their stroke was still strictly regulation and their behavior impeccably correct, they were boiling over with vitality and radiating a subtle but unmistakable aura of good cheer.

Upton realized this change by the feel of the gig as they snatched her through the water. He

took occasion to lean forward a little in the stern sheets, just as Jim Smiley, who was rowing stroke, stretched aft to dip his oar. This brought their heads pretty close together when Smiley began to empty his lungs at the start of the pull.

"Rum!" said the lieutenant to himself, as the blast hit him, bows on. "How do they always get it?"

It was a baffling mystery. Not a drop of rum nor a copper cent in the ship; not a friend in port nor a single shore boat allowed to come alongside, and yet here was Thirsty Jim with a breath like a burning distillery.

A moderate drinker himself, Upton believed in the old navy doctrine that a man might drink as much as he could hold — so long as he held it. The crew of his gig were holding their rum as well as they were holding their stroke. Such being the case, the lieutenant saw no reason for seeing anything — officially.

Besides, he had just noticed another boat pulling swiftly across the half mile of moonlit water between the city and the riding lights of the *Brotherly Love*. By the light of the moon — in her second quarter and an hour past the zenith — Upton saw the other boat was a Customs

House galley, fully manned and on the point of coming alongside his ship.

"It's that Don Eufemio Gonzales, the collector, again," he thought indignantly. "Confound the fellow's impudence! Let me catch him aboard, and he'll collect something he isn't looking for. Yet, by thunder, there he goes over the starboard rail!"

Unchallenged and apparently unseen by those aboard, the long, black galley had slipped into the broad black belt of shadow cast by the anchored *Brotherly Love.* Three or four Customs House officers mounted by the fore chains, swarmed up and stood on the rail, their cocked hats outlined against the moonlight that glinted on their sword blades or musket barrels, as they made ready their weapons before leaping down to the deck below.

"Stretch to it, men!" cried Upton.

He saw more boarders scrambling up by the fore channels and holding on by the shrouds, as the first comers sprang down on deck and disappeared from view.

An instant later a spout of flame showed where some one was firing a musket, apparently at the moon. The report was almost drowned in a

resounding roar of righteous indignation that rolled far across the water.

"No ten men ever raised that yell!" Upton told himself, as he called for a faster stroke. "What in creation is going on aboard?"

Plenty of things seemed to be happening just then on the deck of the *Brotherly Love*. What Upton saw next was the sudden reappearance of the man who had fired the musket. At least, he was still holding it at the ready as he rose high into the air. Head first and backward, he soared up across the rail, turned heels over cocked hat and plumped down into the stagnant harbor water, just abaft the galley, with a splendid splash.

There was no more musketry, but a crashing crossfire of Yankee cuss words and Spanish oaths. Steel clashed on steel; fist and belaying pin thudded home. More Customs House officers scrambled aboard to bear their part in the fray. Two of these had just topped the gunwale when they met the second one of their comrades to quit the ship. He, too, was traveling head first (but face downward, as if he had just dived off a good springboard). Passing between his two friends, he clasped them both convul-

sively around the knees. Down crashed the three of them, interlocked, on the bottom boards of the galley, with an impact that almost capsized the boat.

Before they could sort themselves out and get up, the luckless trio were hammered out flat by the rest of the boarding party, hurled back in headlong retreat. Right side up or base over apex, through the ports or over the rail, the swarthy little *aduaneros* came tumbling down overside.

The last one to leave was their valiant commander, Don Eufemio Gonzales. He came sideways and horizontal, as if two playful giants had picked him up by the wrists and ankles, swung him three times and let go. For an instant his chubby contour showed round and unmistakable against the moon. Then down he soused alongside, between the ship and the galley, now shoving off in haste.

Hauling Don Eufemio and the somersaulting musketeer aboard, the Customs House crew pulled for the shore, rowing raggedly, but making very fair speed. A broadside of oranges, lemons, guavas, roasting yams and empty rum bottles pelted them as they fled. The Yankee

bluejackets lined the rail, laughing, jeering and hurling everything handy. Some of them were wearing captured cocked hats and all were enjoying themselves hugely, until they saw the gig come alongside and a different kind of a cocked hat came aboard.

"Mr. Jackson!" demanded Upton in his sternest voice, as soon as he hit the deck. "What the thus, so and otherwise do you mean by permitting this disgraceful orgy, sir?"

No one answered. Silence, through which the receding *tock-tock* of the galley's oars in the rowlocks could be heard distinctly, fell on the paralyzed crowd aboard the *Brotherly Love.*

"For this you shall pay, O drunken sons of drunkards! For this you shall pay!" came the angry voice of Don Eufemio from a safe distance.

"Aquí, Señor Aduanero!" called another voice from a different point in the darkness. It seemed to come from somewhere off the starboard quarter of the *Brotherly Love.* "Man overboard! Save us, Don Eufemio!"

"I come, *amigo;* I come!" Don Eufemio assured the owner of the unseen voice, whose tones struck Upton as being those of some one he

knew but could not think of just then, particularly as he had more urgent business in hand.

Getting no response from the master's mate, Lieutenant Upton, now standing in the place of judgment by the mainmast, summoned the next highest in authority.

"Seaman Jones, to the mast!"

Old Barbary Jones, with a new black eye, a torn uniform and both holds full of sugar-cane rum, but still under control, stepped aft and touched his forelock.

"Where's Mr. Jackson?"

"Taking a watch below, sir."

"Barlow, inform Mr. Jackson that I wish to see him on deck instanter. And now, Jones, what the thundering blue blazes has been going on aboard here?"

"Beggin' your honor's pardon, sir," faltered Barbary Jones, "we was havin' a little party, sir."

"With whom and by what authority?" demanded the lieutenant.

"With them visitors from the *Flash,* sir. A lot of their liberty men came out in a shore boat to pay us a friendly call. They'd heard somehow that we was ill found, and brought the

refreshments with 'em, as you might say, sir. Roast chickens and sassingers, soft tack, tarts, fruits and vegetables—"

"And rum," cut in the lieutenant. "Never mind the bill of fare. Tell what happened."

"Well, sir, Mr. Jackson granted permission and the visitors came aboard. We made 'em free of the foc'sle, sir, and all hands sat down to the banquet, 'cept only the anchor watch and the lazarette sentry — them two being relieved at frequent intervals, sir. We had a most happy time, sir, and all went well until just after the gig had shoved off to fetch your honor aboard. It was just about then, sir, that some forsaken idjit axed the fatal question: who won the War of 1812?

"Then we went up on deck where we could have elbow room to argue it out, sir. We and the Britishers was havin' it out, sir, in proper sailorlike style and disturbin' nobody, when all of a sudden them swabs of Diegos comes rushin' aboard like a cuttin' out party, very hostile and abusive and a-brandishin' swords and guns, sir. I give you my word, sir, one of 'em would have shot me dead with a musket if I hadn't knocked up the muzzle just in time and then given him a

little tap on the chin just to quiet him, sir. Bein' attacked in that uncalled-for manner, we and the Britishers quit argifyin' about who won the war, j'ined forces and repelled boarders, sir."

"I see," said Upton.

He had already noted ten or a dozen British bluejackets standing rigidly at attention among the Yankee man-o'-warsmen, and anxiously waiting for him to pronounce their fate. Pointedly ignoring their presence, the American officer fixed his eye on the foretopmast backstays.

"Jones," he said sternly, "I'll attend to you and the rest of the crew in a minute. As for those Britishers, it's lucky for them that they had left this ship before I came aboard. Otherwise, I should have had to report them to their own captain, who would have had them flogged to within an inch of their lives. I understood you to say, Jones, that the visitors had gone?"

"Aye, aye, sir," agreed Jones, also looking skyward.

They heard the faintest possible lisping of cautious feet gliding across the deck. Away shot the shore boat that had been lying alongside, its crew rowing the regulation Royal Navy stroke. A cable length away, they lay on their

oars and gave three loud hurrahs. Then back to the shore they pulled, singing appreciatively:

Sir Maurice FitzMaurice, you knows him quite well!

Upton lowered his eyes from the foretopmast backstay and fixed them on his crew, with a look of extreme displeasure. He had harsh words to say about drunk and disorderly conduct, when he discovered Abner Barlow standing before him, eagerly waiting to catch the lieutenant's eye.

"Sir," he burst out excitedly. "I can't find Mr. Jackson nowheres below!"

"What? Then when did he leave the cabin?"

"I — I dunno, sir."

"Why didn't you ask the lazarette sentry, then?" asked Upton.

"Because he isn't there either, sir," reported Barlow. "But the lazarette door's safe barred."

Upton had had the three prisoners removed from the cable tier, which was an awkward place to guard, to the empty lazarette, with a bar across the door and a sentry posted outside. He knew who was supposed to be on guard then.

"Seaman Morse, to the mast!" he called.

Morse, girt with a cutlass and looking most unhappy, came out of the shadows forward.

"Why have you quit your post?"

"S-sir, Mr. Jackson said as how he couldn't bear to sit and eat with a starvin' man standin' there and lookin' at him so wistful-like, sir. He told me to lay forward for a couple of minutes and get a bellyful, while he'd keep an eye on the lazarette door, sir. I'd had a snack and was just startin' aft when the rookus broke out over who won the war. One o' them Britishers fell foul o' me and so, sir —"

"That'll do. To your post! Jones, station an anchor watch. You and the rest, turn to and scrub this floating pig-pen back into the semblance of a ship again. I'll 'tend to your cases later."

Had old Essex Jackson been fuddling himself with rum, wondered Upton, as he sprang down the companionway into the cabin. By the evidence on the cabin table, the master's mate had been having a snug little party of his own. A cold roast chicken, a long white crusty loaf, a plateful of dangerous looking Spanish *dulces* and a bottle of rum — all three quarters con-

sumed — showed what had been sent aft with the compliments of the British visitors. A cigar butt on the edge of the plate was dead and cold, and a chair lay overturned on the cabin carpet, as if the solitary feaster had sprung up in haste and left the table some little time ago. But of Mr. Jackson himself there was no sign.

Determined to make a thorough search for himself, Upton stepped up to the table and reached for the battle lantern hanging from a hook in one of the deck beams overhead. Before his fingers could touch it, however, his foot came in contact with something soft and solid.

Upton stooped down and discovered the doubled-up body of Essex Jackson, where it had been completely concealed in the black darkness underneath the table. He lifted him into a chair and anxiously felt his heart. To his relief, it was beating strongly.

Joel Morse, who had been standing importantly before the barred lazarette door, with his cutlass drawn, dropped his weapon and stared dumbfoundedly at the revelation.

"Pour some rum down his throat," Upton ordered him. "Lively, there."

The lieutenant snatched down the lantern

from the hook, picked up the seaman's forgotten cutlass, and unbarred the door. Leaving Morse to attend to the stricken man by the sufficient light of the moon, Upton went down with the lantern into the lazarette. As he had more than half expected, he found it empty. The prisoners were gone.

"Go forward and get to work," he ordered Morse, on his return to the cabin. Then Upton plied Essex Jackson with rum and water, until the master's mate gurgled, opened his eyes and spoke.

"Did they get away?"

"All three of them. Tell me what happened after you let Morse leave the cabin."

"I was trying to cut the larboard leg off that there fowl, but the durned thing was jammed in the socket and wouldn't fetch away. I was sawing at it, when I heard something, looked up, and there was Gasparilla's face a-grinnin' right into mine. And — and that's all I do remember, sir. Guess he must have fetched me a clip alongside the head."

"He did, with the door bar," supplemented Upton. "Then he put it back in the cleats and stowed you under the table, so's to leave every-

thing looking shipshape, after he and his pals had dropped overboard through the stern windows. Too much hilarity going on forward, or too much scrimmaging on deck, whichever it was just then, for anybody to notice the splash."

"It's all my fault," groaned Essex Jackson, holding his aching head. "I ought never to have let Morse quit his post, nor taken my eyes off that door for a holy second. But how in Tophet did they ever lift out that bar? They couldn't have reached it through them little air holes, sir."

He frowned perplexedly at the row of small round openings which Upton had had cut through the upper part of the panel, to ventilate the otherwise tightly closed lazarette.

"No, but they could have poked out this, Mr. Jackson."

Upton, who had been looking on the cabin floor for a bent wire or something of the sort, held up a lanyard made of narrow strips of dirty cotton cloth, braided together, with a slip noose at the end.

"They must have torn up one of their shirts and made this lanyard some time ago. Guess they were figuring on throwing it over the sen-

try's head and choking him, when he stood near enough and had his back turned. Those rats inside must have been keeping a close watch through the peep holes and waiting their chance.

"I'd forgotten that the Scorpion has a hand and wrist like a girl's, or else I'd have had these holes made smaller. He must have got his hand out far enough to twiddle this noose over the end of the bar, haul taut, and lift it out of the cleats. Then the noose probably dropped off the bar when Gasparilla was swinging it as a club."

"And now, they're swimming for shore," exclaimed Jackson, as if the idea had just come to his club-shocked brain. "Let me take the gig, sir, and pick 'em up before they get too far!"

"They've been picked up already by the Customs House boat, I'll bet you a year's pay," said Upton. "I thought there was something familiar about that voice I heard calling for help, a while ago."

He related to Jackson what had been taking place on deck.

"We can't expect to have our crew knock seven bells out of the Collector of the Port and a boatload of tide waiters, without our hearing

something about it afterwards. Don Eufemio must be telling his sorrows to somebody ashore by this time. I guess I'll be called on to do some explaining pretty soon."

Surely enough, soon after midnight came Don Patricio Dugan.

"Where's the man who hit Don Eufemio in the roight eye?" he demanded imperiously, as he came aboard.

"I own this ship, sir," retorted Upton, implying that as captain — or "owner" in navy slang — he alone was responsible to outsiders for whatever happened aboard.

"And don't I know it?" replied the Irishman sweetly. "Sure and I only asked because I want to kiss the hard-fisted spalpeen who gave El Zapo the shiner. Ye have him to thank, Misther Upton, that there'll be no more delay in handlin' yer affairs. His Excellency the Governor General rayquests the honor av yer presence at the Palacio, immediately and at wance!"

CHAPTER IX: *At the Palacio*

"TO THE Carcel with them! They are all students, and students are all Liberals and Liberals are all enemies of God and King Ferdinand!"

So shrilled the senile voice of Don Francisco Vives, Governor General of Cuba, as he sat in judgment in the Throne Room of the Palacio. Three centuries of viceroys, *adelantados* and *conquistadores* looked down upon him from the time-mellowed canvases upon the lofty walls, but the earliest of them all was no more medieval than he.

His was a sixteenth-century Spanish mind of the simplest and most rigid type. Like the Bourbons whom he served and adored, Don Francisco Vives had learned nothing and forgotten nothing. He had lived through the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Era, but he still wore knee breeches, took snuff and powdered his hair.

The loss of all Mexico, Central and South

America failed to shake his impregnable belief that Spain was the divinely ordained ruler of the New World. Don Francisco's sense of proportion may be gauged from the historic fact that four years later, in 1829, he actually sent an expeditionary force of three thousand Spanish conscripts to invade and reconquer Mexico.

Invested with extraordinary and practically absolute power, he had stamped out plot after plot to stir up a Cuban insurrection against Spanish rule. The latest and most dangerous of these conspiracies had just been discovered by the Governor General's astute spies — some of whom had organized it very well.

Prompt measures had been taken for the suppression of the threatened uprising. Two grumbling (and unpaid) line regiments were confined to their barracks and a notoriously well-educated volunteer battalion ordered to hand over its arms and disband. Havana had been placed in a state of siege. Seven editors, nine professors and about two hundred students were sharing the already overcrowded cells of the Carcel and La Fuerza with the lowest criminals. Everybody else suspected of Liberal tendencies was either under arrest or under cover.

For once, the ponderous wheels of Spanish justice were revolving rapidly. Upton, entering the Throne Room with Don Patricio, had hardly heard the last batch of suspects ordered into confinement than he found himself arraigned before the judgment seat.

"Behold him, your Excellency!" spluttered the wrathful Don Eufemio, glaring balefully out of his one available eye. "Behold the confessed commander of the lawless ship without papers! Why is he still permitted to wear a sword? Is it thus, Don Patricio, that you arrest the ringleader of those who have assaulted the officers of the King?"

Don Patricio smiled but said nothing, even as he had done nothing during the riot aboard the *Brotherly Love,* although his gunboat had been lying within easy hearing distance of the fray. He was looking forward shrewdly to the time when Uncle Sam might demand satisfaction and the Governor General start looking around for a handy scapegoat.

"*Basta!*" snapped the fierce little old man upon the throne. "Confine yourself, Don Eufemio, to the matter in hand. Proceed with the accusation."

Don Eufemio proceeded rapidly and effectively to present the charges and evidence against Upton and the *Brotherly Love*. The American's acknowledged ignorance of the ownership of the vessel, his lack of written orders or documentary support of any kind, the marks of violence within the cabin, the Spanish subjects held in captivity aboard, their piteous appeal and their testimony about hidden guns and a man-o'-war pennant — all these points were effectively presented.

He had been prevented, most officiously, by Don Patricio, from seizing this highly suspicious craft, continued Don Eufemio. But he had kept her under observation and forbidden all shore boats to approach her. And when a violation of this order had been reported, somewhat tardily, by one of his observers, the Collector had gone himself to seize the offending shore boat and arrest its crew.

But when he had boarded the vessel, in the execution of his duty, he had been most violently assaulted, not only by such members of her crew as he had seen before, but by a vast and ferocious multitude of other Yankees, who had evidently been concealed aboard, who could

say for what nefarious purpose? Was it not significant, concluded Don Eufemio, that the arrival of this mysterious and formidable craft should coincide with the conspiracy so fortunately discovered? Who could doubt that some sinister connection lay between these ominous circumstances?

"What have you to say for yourself, *Señor Teniente?*" asked the Governor General, turning his suspicious old eyes on the American.

Upton stated his side of the case as convincingly as he could, but the more he spoke the more he realized how utterly he was failing to convince Don Francisco Vives. That a naval officer should take command of a ship, on verbal orders, and then change her destination from Kingston to Havana, on his own responsibility, was entirely too fantastic for any one to believe who had been bred for half a century in the pedantic, precedent-bound service of Spain.

On the other hand, it was only too easy for Don Francisco to see in the commander of the *Brotherly Love* a particularly audacious and dangerous specimen of the American filibusters who were continually attempting to smuggle in arms and assistance to the would-be *insurrectos*

of Cuba. With his mind full of the newly discovered conspiracy, the Governor General was taking no chances.

"It is a matter to be decided by the courts," he declared.

Knowing the rapacity of those courts and mindful of the property committed to his charge, Upton protested vigorously. Did His Excellency doubt that he was an officer of the United States Navy? Then let His Excellency communicate with Captain Doughty of the *Constellation,* now doubtless at Kingston, Jamaica, and within two or three weeks at the latest, ample documentary evidence would be at hand.

"It shall be done," promised Don Francisco. "In the meanwhile, however, public security demands that the vessel be seized and searched, and her commander and crew taken into custody without delay."

Don Eufemio Gonzales was grinning with huge delight, Don Patricio Dugan was swearing sympathetically under his breath, and the officer of the guard was holding out his hand to receive the belt and sword that Upton was on the point of unbuckling and handing over,

when from the other end of the Throne Room came a protesting cry.

"Your Excellency, I know this *caballero!* He is indeed an officer of the United States Navy. Permit me to offer my testimony on his behalf!"

The Governor General, angry at the interruption, bent a fierce, myopic glare at the newcomer, until he drew near enough to be recognized. Straightway the frown melted into a welcoming, though almost toothless smile.

"Ah, Don Pablo Estrada! What has brought you so suddenly from your estates at Miramar?"

"The rumor of an insurrection," declared Don Pablo, with evident relish and appreciation of the dramatic value of his entrance. "Learning from the guard at the city gate that in truth a vile conspiracy had been unearthed, I went to my town house, assumed the uniform of my rank and have come to assure Your Excellency that you may depend upon the loyalty of every officer and man of the Hidalgo Battalion, whose swords I lay with mine at your feet."

"Great day in the morning!" soliloquized the astonished Daniel Upton. "And this star-span-

gled archduke says that he knows me! I never heard or saw anything like him before, outside the Park Row Theatre."

There was indeed something theatrical about the graceful gestures and balanced rhetoric of this Don Pablo Estrada, who claimed to know Upton but whom Upton could not for the life of him recall, either by name or feature. While he was trying to do so, Don Pablo suddenly swooped down upon him, brushed aside the officer of the guard, embraced Upton in a pair of unexpectedly strong arms and kissed him fervidly on both cheeks.

"My savior!" he proclaimed ecstatically. "My valiant preserver!"

"Glad to learn that I saved and preserved you once, sir," said Upton, breaking away. "Just when did you say it was?"

Don Pablo burst into laughter that rang like music through the vast gloomy hall.

"Ah, the modesty of the valiant *teniente!* He has performed so many valorous actions that he cannot recall them all."

"But are you sure, Don Pablo, that this gentleman is what you take him for?" inquired the Governor General. "He does not appear to

recognize you, and the question of his identity and status is of the gravest import."

"If your Excellency will permit me to relate the circumstances under which I had the good fortune to encounter the *Teniente Americano,*" replied Don Pablo, "it will be seen why his face and name have so deeply engraved themselves upon my memory, while my own poor cognizance and features have left a slighter and less enduring impression upon him.

"As all men know, my family, the Estradas, have been land-owners here in Cuba since the days of the *conquistadores.* The death of my uncle, Don Tomas, and of both his sons in the yellow fever epidemic of 1821, caused the property to revert to me.

"At that time, I was pursuing my studies at the University of Salamanca. As soon as I had been notified of my succession to the estate, I embarked at Cadiz for Havana on the packet ship *San Jorge.* We crossed the Atlantic safely, but off San Salvador we were sighted and pursued by a pirate brigantine.

"Our captain spread all sail, only to see the pursuer gaining upon us as if we had been at anchor. He bade us prepare our arms and de-

fend ourselves valiantly. The *San Jorge* was a tall ship, mounting many guns, and the victory would assuredly have been ours, had not the cowardly pirates fought unfairly. They kept craftily beyond the range of our bristling batteries, sailing around us and smiting us sorely with solid shot from a long thirty-two-pounder pivot gun.

"A falling spar struck down and killed our gallant captain. His death demoralized the crew, some of whom flinched from their guns, while the others slackened their fire. Like a swooping falcon, the pirate brigantine ranged up alongside, her grapnels ready for heaving, her boarders crouched to spring.

"Foremost of all, ready to lead the others overside as soon as the vessels touched, stood a swarthy, powerfully built man of commanding aspect. He wore an old-fashioned cocked hat and a coat cut like that of a naval officer, but green instead of blue. No sooner did I perceive him than I realized that this must be the pirate chief.

"Like every other male passenger, I had been provided with a musket. As the corsair captain drew abreast of where I was standing at the

packet's rail, I took careful aim. Our eyes met. Glancing along the barrel, I saw the pirate's swarthy cheek turn pale with the fear of death. I pressed the trigger — and the priming flashed in the pan! The wretched flintlock had missed fire. I was pricking the flint to try again, when I heard the seaman who stood beside me give a cry of horror. '*Sangre de Dios!* It is Jean Lafitte!'

"At that dread name, an abject panic seized upon our crew. They threw down their pikes and cutlasses and yielded without a blow. Many of them were base enough to acclaim Lafitte and offer to join his band, as the corsair sprang aboard.

"Those who remained true to their King were slain without mercy, save only those of us who were deemed rich enough to be held for ransom. Brutally beaten and heavily ironed, we were thrown into the foul-smelling bilges of the brigantine, there to lie until we had lost all count of time.

"When at last we were brought on deck, the brigantine was riding at anchor in a landlocked haven, surrounded by low dunes and endless beaches of dazzling sunlit sand. A formidable

flotilla of corsair craft lay beside us; batteries guarded the harbor mouth, and a wretched hamlet of sailcloth tents and driftwood huts, reeking with vice and villainy, defaced the shore. Over all floated the red, white and green banner of rebellious Mexico.

"Such was the outlaw settlement established by Jean Lafitte at Isla Galvez, on the coast of Texas, in 1821. There I remained a prisoner for three months, pent in a filthy calaboose, awaiting the payment of ransom.

"The time set by Lafitte for the payment of my ransom had nearly expired, and his envoy apparently had been imprisoned or put to death. Therefore the outlaw chief decreed that my life must pay the forfeit. He refused my petition to die a soldier's death by lead or steel. Instead, he ordered a gallows to be erected, within plain sight of my prison window.

"On the morning of the third day before the one set for my execution, I was awakened by the sound of a cannon shot. I rushed to the window and beheld, beyond the hateful black cross-beam of the gallows, the beautiful white sails of a man-of-war standing in to the harbor.

"It was the United States Brig *Enterprise,*

and her captain lost no time in proclaiming the purpose of his coming. Some of Lafitte's so-called privateersmen had not confined themselves to attacking Spanish vessels, but had also captured and plundered American merchantmen. Therefore the *Enterprise* had been sent to extirpate this den of piracy at Isla Galvez.

"She was but one small brig, opposed to a strong flotilla and several forts. But that first blank shot which she had fired for a warning, consumed all the powder that was burned that day. Without the slightest resistance, Jean Lafitte suffered his vessels to be seized, his batteries dismantled and his town razed to the ground.

"Long before the landing party from the *Enterprise* had reached the shore, the doors of the calaboose had been thrown open and the captives set free. I looked forward to seeing Lafitte hanged on the gallows he had built for me, but instead, he and all the rest of the population of Isla Galvez were taken to New Orleans.

"On the voyage thither, I succeeded in showing the proofs of my identity, which had induced Lafitte to spare my life in the first place, to the captain of the *Enterprise*. That officer turned me over to the Spanish consul at New

Orleans, by whom I was sent to Havana, to claim and receive possession of the lands of my fathers.

"Under those impressive circumstances, your Excellency, is it strange that I should have such strong and grateful recollections of that beautiful brig, the *Enterprise;* or of this gallant officer who was then her first lieutenant, Don Daniel Upton?"

CHAPTER X: *Hasta La Vista!*

"BUT why didn't ye say in the first place that ye knew Don Pablo Estrada?" persisted Don Patricio Dugan. "Look at the world av throuble it would have saved ye."

Three days had passed since the controversy with the collector of the port and the midnight conference at the Palacio. Now outwardly all was peace and loving concord. Upton had just finished breakfast — which in Havana means a hearty noon meal — on board the *Isla Esmeralda.* He and his host were taking their post-prandial ease in long wicker chairs beneath the quarter-deck awning.

Turning a British or American gunboat into a yacht in that fashion would have caused severe earthquakes and hurricanes at the Admiralty or the Navy Department. But Don Patricio apparently wrote his own regulations.

"Why didn't ye just say that ye knew him?" he repeated.

"Because I didn't know that I knew him," explained Upton. "I must have seen him at Isla Galvez, but I've never thought of him since nor heard his name, to my knowledge, until three nights ago. I do remember going ashore in command of the landing party from the *Enterprise,* and ordering the gallows to be pulled down and the calaboose set on fire, when we demolished the town.

"But the jail was empty — that is to say, if you can call anything empty when it's densely populated per cubic inch — and as for the released prisoners, we must have gathered them in and mixed them up with the picaroons, bartenders, card sharpers, flash-house keepers, beach combers, and the rest of the sinful citizenry of that pirate town. I've seen some hard settlements in my time, but Isla Galvez in '21 would have sickened Satan.

"They were all loudly protesting their innocence, of course, while we were herding them aboard the brig or into their own vessels, with a guard of our men in charge of each captured craft. Don Pablo himself must have been aboard the *Enterprise,* for now that I've been rubbing the verdigris off that part of my mem-

ory, I've a dim recollection of somebody about his build and displacement coming aft in my watch, sometime during the passage North, to ask permission to speak with Captain Kearney.

"We had been instructed to sort out the scalawags who had been committing piracy against American ships, and so we were on the lookout for anybody who might offer to turn State's evidence. I missed most of what this lad was trying to tell me, for my Spanish was pretty primitive in those days, but I made out the words *evidencia* and *testimonio.* On the strength of those and his bundle of greasy papers, I sent him in to the captain.

"As I remember, he was looking about the way you'd expect anybody to look, after spending a week or two in the bilges and three months in that flea-bitten calaboose. It must have been Don Pablo, but he wasn't using the same brand of perfumery, nor arrayed like Solomon in all his glory, as he was the other night.

"I've never seen so many mixed colors on one coat nor so many fathoms of gold lace on one pair of pants before. What's the exalted rank that goes with those rainbow regimentals?"

"Colonel av *mobilizados,*" expounded Du-

gan. "In plain language — milishymen. Don Pablo Estrada is colonel, landlord and chief av the clan to the Hidalgo Battalion, raised, armed and organized be himself, amongst his own tinantry, down in the Vuelta Abajo. He's the biggest landowner in that end av Cuba, where the rale Havana leaf and the sugar cane grow like turf in Tipperary. He owns slaves, horses, horned cattle, mules, jackasses and long-nosed black pigs beyant the powers av computation; mines and timber, fishin' boats and coastwise schooners, *ranchos, estancias* and *ingenios,* a grand house for iv'ry day in the week and parishes for a month av Sundays. The richest man in all Cuba and the Governor General's closest friend, is Don Pablo Estrada."

"Well, I'm glad to learn that he can afford it," Upton remarked with satisfaction. "For the way he's been playing fairy godmother to the ship has made me downright afraid he'd go into bankruptcy. All I asked him to do, after he'd let up kissing me and calling me his noble preserver — instead of its being himself who'd just preserved me from being put under arrest as a filibuster — all I asked him to do was to please persuade some Havana merchant to ac-

cept my order on the Treasury to pay for sufficient stores for the run to Kingston.

"Instead of which, Don Pablo appears to have issued a royal edict that every blamed thing in Havana, except the palm trees and the Cathedral and the cobblestones in the Plaza de Armas, be loaded into lighters and sent out to the *Brotherly Love,* with his compliments. Great day in the morning, Pat, have you seen the stuff that's been going aboard?"

"That I have, Dan, and I warn ye, wan more lighter load av champagne and truffles and ye'll sink at yer moorings."

"Champagne and truffles!" snorted Upton, jumping up out of his chair and pacing the deck. "Those are just about the only kickshaws he hasn't thought of yet. We've got stores and live stock to last us across the Western Ocean and liquor to float the ship. Every man in the crew is sporting a new rig from silver shoe buckles to varnished hat, sent packed in a scrimshawed sea chest with fancy shackles and a gold doubloon in the till. New pots in the galley and lamps in the cabin — china dishes, cut-glass decanters, and the Lord knows what besides.

"Remember how I told you how the Black

Bloodhound's men had smashed up all the navigating instruments? Well, I went ashore yesterday to pick up something of the kind for the run to Kingston. I found plenty of instruments in various stores, but the dealers all know me by this time, and whatever I took a fancy to was not for sale. This morning it's been raining chronometers, barometers, quadrants and artificial horizons, fit to beat the Arabian Nights."

"Then what's the sense av growlin' and puttin' up an umbrelly?" asked Don Patricio. "Praise the saints and fill yer casks."

"Man, can't I make you realize that this whole business is dead against regulations?" expostulated the American naval officer. "I'm strictly forbidden to accept presents of this sort from anybody, either for myself or the ship. My accounts for this voyage are going to read like a maniac's dream."

"Lave all that to the frigate's purser, after ye've rej'ined the *Constellation* at Kingston," advised the wily Don Patricio. "Let him have the pickin's and he'll fix ye up a grand set av papers, or I don't know pursers."

"You don't know Captain Ezra T. Doughty," retorted Upton. "I'd hate to be the misguided

officer who asked that rock-ribbed old Puritan to countersign any fairy stories. There's just one way out of this mix-up. I've got to wrestle in prayer with Don Pablo until I get him to see it from my point of view."

"Ye couldn't warp him 'round to that same this side av Judgment Day," Dugan warned him. "Breathe wan word av payment and ye've as good as slapped his face. A rale Spanish grandee like Don Pablo has more pride av hospitality than an Arab and less sense av business than ould Abraham with his flocks and herds. With some, 'tis only a bit av politeness, but when Don Pablo tells ye to-night at the door av Miramar that his house is yours, he's all but handin' ye the title deeds."

"Why who told you that I was going to spend the night with him at Miramar?"

"Himself, when he asked me to come along and make it a party. But I told Don Pablo confidential-like, as I'm now whisperin' it to you, that I'm slippin' out to sea on to-morrow mornin's tide. And betwane you and me and this sorrowful array av empty bottles, I'm puttin' out after the Black Bloodhound."

"Here's to the day you lay him aboard,"

pledged Upton, raising his glass. "It will be a fair fight if ever you fall in with him, for I never saw two schooners more closely matched."

He looked aloft at the gunboat's tapering spars and forward at her powerful batteries and the swarthy faces of her trimly uniformed but villainous looking crew. Was Brown right, wondered Upton? He had been half wishing to hear that some fresh outrage had been perpetrated by the Black Bloodhound while Don Patricio was still in port. Were the two commanders one and the same? Certainly their schooners were most marvelously alike — a fact which Don Patricio made no attempt to deny.

"Ye're right, they are that," he observed carelessly. "Both Baltimore-built and be the same builder, I shouldn't wonder. Both ex-Yankee privateers, I'm thinkin', and what's more, both commanded be ex-Yankee privateersmen, if I'm anny judge av the breed."

"The Black Bloodhound an American? What makes you think that?"

"His ch'ice av a vessel, his way av handlin' her, his receivin' inside information av specie shipments from American ports, his mask and gloves to cover his sallow skin, and his silence

to hide the nasal twang av him. Then consider the cruelty av his black heart. Look at the delight he takes in torturin' the crews and passengers av American ships. Isn't it an old sayin' that there's none so bitter as a renegade? A renegade Yankee privateersman, turned pirate and slaver, that's what I take him to be."

"Why slaver?"

"Becaze there's no smarter seaman nor crueler brute afloat this day than a Yankee slaver. And what's the slave trade but piracy, under yer Constitution? And doesn't the Black Bloodhound know that trade? Didn't he take four slave ships, no less, last year, knock the crews on the head and make off with the slaves? Doesn't that prove he knows the markets for black ivory?"

"There's little he doesn't know in the way of villainy, I fear," said Upton, looking at his watch that he had lately redeemed from pawn. Every commercial house in Havana was eager to advance him ready money on his note, endorsed by Don Pablo Estrada. Every difficulty had vanished, every desire had been fulfilled — except one.

Under no consideration would the Governor

General permit him to purchase any guns or ammunition for the defense of the *Brotherly Love.* On that point, his Excellency was absolutely unyielding.

He had accepted his dear friend Don Pablo Estrada's identification of Upton as an officer of the United States Navy. A very friendly visit of Don Patricio Dugan and two Spanish army officers to the *Brotherly Love,* where they had been shown the empty lazarette, the pennant and the wooden guns, was all that had ever come of the threat to search the ship for prisoners and concealed arms.

The Governor General had cackled a senile laugh at the story of the Quaker guns made of black-painted spar butts, and had shared the jest with his cronies. Within twenty-four hours, all Havana was gossiping about the latest Yankee notion. This made it a practical certainty that the Black Bloodhound and every other pirate who had a friend in Havana would be fully informed of the defenceless state of the *Brotherly Love.*

The refusal of the authorities to sell Upton any guns was common knowledge. But no one seemed to have any idea of what had become

of the three escaped pirates: Gasparilla, Big Congo and the Scorpion. Upton felt morally certain that they had been picked up and brought ashore by Don Eufemio, the collector, and then turned loose, perhaps immediately, perhaps after the testimony of Don Pablo Estrada had established Upton's identity.

If Don Eufemio had ever thought of putting Gasparilla in the witness box, he would have abandoned that idea with great suddenness, as soon as he heard from Don Pablo how he had been a prisoner of Lafitte's at Isla Galvez. For, as Upton knew, Gasparilla had been a prominent citizen of that pirate town, and would in all probability have been identified promptly by Don Pablo if the two had ever met in court.

Don Eufemio, of course, simply denied having picked up the swimming fugitives. He and the others in authority united in assuring Upton that no man or men could possibly have swum so great a distance in Havana harbor, without being attacked and devoured by the notorious harbor sharks. Remembering what had happened to some other sharks off Cape San Antonio, Upton was disposed to bet on the swimmers.

"Now that ye've taken on stores, ye'll be sailing in a day or so," observed Don Patricio, as he escorted his guest to the gangway.

Upton nodded, while his eyes kept studying every inch of the gleaming white and green paintwork.

"'Tis a pity the Governor General will not sell ye anny guns," continued the Irishman. "But he has his r'asons."

"How about your honest friend, the smuggler of Regla?" asked Upton, probing for Don Patricio's real sympathies. "Could he oblige me, say, with a couple of carronades and a long eighteen?"

"He could not, and for the same r'ason as His Excellency. And that is, in wan word, pathriotism."

"A patriot *and* a smuggler?"

"And why not?" demanded Don Patricio warmly. "Have ye so soon forgotten how the *contrabandistas* and the brigands av Spain rose like wan man to fight for God and King Ferdinand against Napoleon? Have ye forgotten that although Vera Cruz is gone, the King's flag still flies over San Juan d'Ulloa Castle? Have ye forgotten that when Hernando Cortez sailed

for the conquest av Mexico, he sailed from Cuba?

"From the Governor General in the Palacio to the smuggler in Regla, ivery loyal Spaniard in the Iver Faithful Island is lookin' forward to the reconquest av the lost kingdom av New Spain, av Cintral and South America, when the tide av rebellion turns and ebbs away.

"Ye may smile, me Yankee friend, but I tell ye solemnly, Don Francisco Vives is already preparin' for that reconquest. Do ye wonder now that he will not sell ye anny ordnance?

"But don't ye be worryin', for I'll be lookin' after ye. Wan av the Governor General's smartest spies has just found out where the Black Bloodhound has careened his craft down by Guadiana Bay. Kape it dark, while I slip up and put a collar on him.

"Give me regards to Don Pablo Estrada and *hasta la vista.*"

"*Hasta la vista!*" replied Upton cheerily, as his gig shoved off from the gunboat's new-painted side.

Had he or had he not detected the shadow of a dark plank sheer beneath the white, a hint of red in the port-lids' vivid green? Was there

a sinister meaning in Don Patricio's parting words? Was he or was he not the Black Bloodhound?

"It would have saved me a pile of worrying," thought Upton, "if I'd only found some way to scratch his paint."

CHAPTER XI: *Miramar*

"IT IS an ancient jest to speak of a sailor on horseback," observed Don Pablo Estrada to his guest, as they rode together down the rough cart track westward from Havana to Miramar. "But you, Don Daniel, ride like a true *caballero.*"

"I was raised on the farm," replied the American. "Rode bareback ever since I was big enough to straddle a colt. It would take a smart man to figure how to fall overboard from one of these high-pooped Spanish saddles on a single-footing pony."

Sitting easily upright, in his trim white breeches and with a borrowed pair of huge Spanish spurs on the heels of his Hessian boots, Upton looked more like a cavalryman than a naval officer. He had his sword by his side and a brace of boarding pistols in the saddle holsters. He had brought these weapons ashore with him by his host's request. Don Pablo himself was

similarly armed, while behind them as they rode jingled a dozen ferocious-looking Guardias Civiles.

"One must take precautions," explained Don Pablo, "with rebellion still smoldering throughout the countryside."

Yet to Upton's eye, the country through which they were riding seemed as peaceful as it was prosperous. Except for themselves and their escort, he had not seen an armed man since mid-afternoon, when they had ridden out through one of the landward gates of the city wall.

Beyond the *barrios,* the road ran between flourishing *vegas* or plantations of the true native Cuban tobacco — doomed to extinction by fire and pestilence during the Ten Years' War and now one of the world's lost treasures. Cane fields were few and small. Once they came to where a family of French refugees from Haiti were cultivating coffee.

Slave gangs, apparently unguarded and armed with knives as big as cutlasses, were more or less at work. Naked black-and-tan children were very much at play. Women with water-jars or baskets balanced on their heads, shovel-

hatted priests, sandalled friars, *arrieros* prodding along their pack mules, and other peaceful persons, were coming and going along the dusty highroad. But of war or rebellion there was not the least sign, until they were near the end of their journey.

The sun had sunk far below the tops of the royal palms that lined the road at this point, where a northward swing of the highway showed sunlit blue water on their right. A musket shot below the limestone ridge along which they were riding sparkled a beautiful landlocked blue lagoon. At the end of a bold, rocky promontory, running out into the harbor, a square building of weathered masonry, with loopholed walls and low, embrasured towers thrust out at the angles, showed black against the evening sky. From a lofty staff on one of the seaward towers flew the red and yellow flag of Spain.

"What fortress is this, Don Pablo?" asked Upton.

"The house of my fathers," answered Estrada proudly. "Miramar."

The sight of home and stable roused the lagging horses to an eager gallop, along the furlong of level road that led to the gate of Miramar.

It was a real gate in a real wall. Parallel with the road and across the base of the promontory ran a twelve-foot curtain of massive masonry, swerving sharply out at the western end to form a neat little flanking bastion, just big enough to emplace a long nine-pounder where it could either lob a solid shot along the road or rake the whole foot of the wall with a stand of grape.

A shakoed head popped up over the parapet with comical suddenness, as if somebody had been stealing a nap on the firing step instead of walking post. Satisfied with a single glance at the oncoming horsemen, whose faces were lit by the level rays of the setting sun, the sentry bawled, *"El coronel!"*

Down banged a drawbridge over the dry ditch; open flew the nail-studded gates, and in through the archway pounded the galloping cavalcade. Reining in his mount with dramatic abruptness, Don Pablo frowned haughtily down at the guard — an awkward squad of unhappy looking negroid militiamen, half of whom were doing their best to present arms, while the rest were still struggling into their coats and cross-belts as they came crowding out through the guardroom door.

"Is it thus you keep watch?" Don Pablo demanded of the abashed little *teniente* who was officer of the guard.

"What if we had been a landing party of pirates or a band of *insurrectos?* By now, your throats would have been cut and Miramar in flames! Let this negligence occur again and it will cost you your epaulettes!"

Ignoring the subaltern's slovenly salute, Don Pablo turned to where the tall Guardias Civiles were sitting their mounts like equestrian statues, except for the sardonic smile beneath their big mustaches.

"At least, we shall have a dozen real soldiers here to-night," he declared. "Sergeant, take your troopers into the *patio,* where my steward will assign you quarters. And now, Don Daniel, let us refresh ourselves after our long and dusty ride."

Down a zigzag bridle path the sure-footed ponies picked their way, descending the cliff-like western side of the promontory to a ribbon of beach between a grove of cedars and the head of a long, narrow cove. There Don Pablo tied his mount to a tree and began to peel off his dusty riding clothes and sweat-soaked shirt.

"Muscled like a wildcat," Upton said to himself as he followed his host's example. "And scarred all over. How in thunder could a landsman get a boarding pike through his left thigh? No other weapon leaves that sort of scar — oh, of course, it must have been a cavalry lance. That's a sword slash across the ribs and a brace of bullet wounds. Well, he may wear a fancy militia uniform but he strips like a soldier.

"You have seen much service, Don Pablo," he observed aloud.

"Mere flea bites, Don Daniel. Come, I will race you to the barrier."

They took off together from a convenient ledge, dived into the deliciously cool water, rose and struck out for the line of black dots drawn across the cove at a point where it widened into the lagoon. Both swam the old-fashioned breast stroke; Upton with dogged, wiry strength, Don Pablo with a sinuous grace that kept him a length in the lead.

They were within twenty yards of the finish, when Upton saw Don Pablo suddenly stop in midstroke and heard him give a strangled cry that was almost instantly choked as he began to

sink. Upton was near enough to catch him under the armpits, almost before the stricken man had sunk beneath the surface. Supporting the limp body with one hand, Upton struck out the other for the line of sunken posts that Don Pablo had called the barrier.

He had reached this row of piles; thrown his arm about one and was filling his lungs for a shout to whoever might be within hearing to launch a boat, when he felt Don Pablo give a convulsive shudder and come to life again.

"It is my heart," he gasped brokenly. "I am subject to these attacks. It will pass in a moment. Let us rest here a little — then I shall be as strong as ever — and able to swim back to the beach."

Breathing heavily, each rested himself with a hand on one of the two-foot hardwood piles, set close together and massively braced and cross-beamed to form a grating through which no man-eating shark could possibly invade Don Pablo's swimming bath. Sharpened stakes, set outside the barrier and sloping up at just the right angle to snag the bottom of a boat coming in from seaward, suggested to Upton's mind that the builder had been thinking not only of

sharks but also of pirates who might try to slip in with muffled oars through the open mouth of the lagoon to attempt a surprise attack on Miramar by way of the bridle path.

Any flotilla would be puzzled to get past this submerged abatis, too strong to be cut away, too near the surface for the lightest jollyboat to cross. Above the western end of the barrier, within easy grapeshot range, frowned the downward-pointing muzzles of two twelve-pounders on the flat top of the northwestern tower of Miramar.

The sills of their embrasures had been sharply sloped to allow the pieces extreme depression. Looking up at the tower battery, Upton noticed that there were three of these square openings in the face of the parapet. The middle one was empty. Through the sloping chute of its deep-cut sill, Upton could see the red-kerchiefed head and bare black arms and shoulders of a tall slave boy who was standing with his back to the parapet and his upraised hands on the halliards of the flagstaff.

Without the least ceremony, he let the great red and yellow flag come down on the run, to fall in a crumpled heap on the platform. Stoop-

ing, the slave disappeared from Upton's line of vision, to reappear a moment later with a shapeless wad of bunting tucked under his arm like a bundle of dirty linen. Then he turned away and vanished.

It was not his flag, it was none of his business, but the indecency of the proceeding filled the American officer with indignation and disgust. The slave, of course, knew no better, but a slave should never have been detailed to such a duty. The blame lay with his master — the master of Miramar.

"He's no soldier!" Upton decided instantly. "He may be a fighter, he may be a colonel — but no properly trained soldier would tolerate anything like that. Post commander — and goes in swimming at retreat!"

Luckily, Don Pablo was behind him, where he could not see the disapproving look that flashed across Upton's raised and averted face.

Don Pablo's countenance, which had turned the color of old parchment, now flushed with life again as his heart resumed its normal beat.

"The attack has passed," he said. "But for you, Don Daniel, I should now be lying dead at the bottom of the cove. You have saved me

from the gallows — and now, from the sea. How can I find words to express my gratitude —? "

"Better not stop to, right now," interrupted the Yankee, afraid of another kiss. "The sun's hit the horizon and it will be night before we can get back to the beach. Take it easy and I'll stand by to lend you a shoulder if you need something to lean on for a spell."

The brief beauty of the tropic twilight flamed and faded away while the bathers were swimming slowly back to the beach at the head of the cove. They waded out by the brilliant light of the waxing moon, already two hours high.

Dark-faced, white-clothed attendants were waiting for them under the cedars, with long fringed towels and long cool glasses of something that left a benediction all the way down a parched throat. Upton's uniform and sword had been taken away, to be brushed and burnished overnight. Solicitous house slaves helped him and Don Pablo into white silk shirts and stockings, silver-buckled pumps and loose linen suits, then held the stirrups for them to mount. Up the bridle path the ponies scampered and scrambled, angled across the bare slope behind

the wall, drummed over a second drawbridge spanning an inner moat, and clattered in through a deep, echoing archway to the patio of Miramar.

The great cobbled courtyard was like the public square of a sizeable town. It was solidly built up on all four sides, with a well in the center. At least a hundred narrow windows pierced the lofty whitewashed walls above the round arches and thick square pillars of the rude arcade that ran around the quadrangle. Only a few of these casements were lit, however, for this was the hour when the charcoal fires were glowing in the little open-air braziers, wherever a cook could find elbow room to toss a *tortilla.*

Clustered about the cooking fires, lounging under the arcade, and loafing all over the place swarmed a cheerful crowd of both sexes, all ages, and all possible shades and blends between black and white. They were casually conversing at the top of their lungs and at the highest possible pitch, making the echoing courtyard resound with racket enough for a revolution. Half the place was in brightest moonlight, half in blackest shadow, out of which the ruddy glow of a brazier lit the laughing face of a pretty

chola girl or the broad blue chest, white plastron and sparkling brass buttons of a Guardia Civile.

Without drawing rein or taking the slightest heed, Don Pablo galloped straight into the crowd, which opened before his horse's nose and closed in behind his tail like water. How the people managed to hear the hoofbeats through all the din in time to jump out of the way was a mystery to Upton. His own mount bolted through with him in the same fashion, reared up and slammed all four hoofs down together in a spine-jolting halt at the stable door.

Between the evil-smelling stable and an equally noisome cattlebyre, a steep stone staircase, unswept and unlighted, led to mysterious upper regions. Don Pablo stood back and begged Upton to precede him up these stairs. In eighteen steps, they mounted from unwashed limestone to polished marble, from squalor to splendor.

Bowing low at the top of the stairs, Don Pablo Estrada said with proud humility, " Don Daniel, my house is your house."

They dined in state in a lofty, paneled hall hung with faded portraits and rusty breastplates

and morions. The after-dinner coffee and cigars were served on the terrace overlooking the moonlit lagoon. There were long bamboo chairs, light tables and orange trees in tubs, but instead of a balustrade at the edge of the terrace was a solid parapet with firing steps for musketeers between the embrasures of a formidable four-gun battery.

Upton strolled over and examined these pieces with professional interest. They were no obsolete relics, but long bronze eighteen-pounders of the latest pattern, in perfect condition and able to bring a plunging, raking fire to bear on any ship standing in through the harbor mouth. The incongruous mixture of furniture and artillery reminded Upton of the quarter-guns in an admiral's cabin on a flagship.

"Is this a house, Don Pablo, or is it a fortress?" he asked.

"It has been both since the days of the *conquistadores,*" replied its owner proudly. "We Estradas have ever held our lands by the sword."

"Medieval!" said Upton to himself. "That's the word I've been reaching for, to describe the whole place and system. The Spaniards came here in the Middle Ages and they've never got

out of them. Thrones and palaces, monks and friars, city walls — and a castle. That's what Miramar is, by thunder! It isn't a home and it isn't an army post — it's a feudal castle. And this is 1825!"

He thought of the cotton mills in his home town, the new gas lights in downtown New York, the diorama in Paris, the *Robert Fulton,* the Erie Canal, and the Stockton and Darlington Railway. How could such things exist at the same time as Miramar? How could he make the medieval-minded Don Pablo Estrada realize that this was the nineteenth century, when it was strictly against regulations to shower down largess on officers and seamen of the United States Navy? How could he ever persuade him to accept even nominal payment for the stores he had furnished the *Brotherly Love?*

Drawing heavily on Sir Walter Scott, and thanking Heaven that he was safely out of earshot of the *Constellation's* wardroom mess, Upton began to speak high praise of chivalry and knightly honor, in terms that made Don Pablo fairly purr with approval. Thence working cautiously round to windward, Upton led from

the honor of a medieval knight to that of a modern military or naval officer, and the disgrace that would befall him unless Don Pablo should condescend to accept some payment for the stores.

Before the host could make any rejoinder, a liveried house slave appeared at the terrace door to announce, "El Capitan Acuna."

A tall, hook-nosed officer of the Guardia Civile, his long black boots gray with the dust of the road, strode stiffly out on the terrace, to apologize for the intrusion and to ask for a word in private with Don Pablo. Excusing himself to Upton, Don Pablo withdrew with the newcomer to the far end of the battery.

There they conversed earnestly for several minutes, while the newcomer produced an official-looking document which Don Pablo, holding it close to his eyes, seemed to be able to read by the brilliant moonlight. Upton lay back in his long chair, enjoying the best cigar he had ever smoked in his life, and listening to the cheerful laughter, singing and strumming of guitars from the crowded patio.

" Seem to be having a regular fandango down there," he mused. " Hullo, who's that bull of

Bashan bellowing so authoritatively? Sounds like the sergeant of those Guardias Civiles who came with us from Havana."

It was indeed the sergeant's voice, raised in reiterated commands. Soon the music was drowned by the clatter of shod hoofs on the courtyard cobbles.

"Guards leading out their mounts," deduced Upton. "Troopers standing to horse. Guess this captain of theirs has come to take our escort away with him on the King's business."

Surely enough, Captain Acuna presently touched his cocked hat and went straddling downstairs again, to ride off into the night with his little troop of military police.

"Fine looking men, your Guardias Civiles," remarked Upton. "But I thought they only served in Spain."

"The Governor General has asked for and obtained a detachment of them for special service in Cuba, because of their high courage and unshakable loyalty," explained Don Pablo. "Ah, Don Daniel, it is not always easy to be loyal."

The master of Miramar threw himself into his armchair and gazed with an expression of

the deepest melancholy out at the moonlit sea.

"You have spoken to me of your duty and your honor, Don Daniel. What could be dearer to me than the honor of him who has twice rescued me from death. For your sake, I shall accept whatever your government may see fit to bestow upon me. Now let me speak to you of my own honor and duty. Let me tell you of the sad plight of my luckless neighbors, the De Guevaras.

"The son of that ancient house, Don Enrique de Guevara, was a lieutenant in the Spanish navy, and a young officer of great promise. His frigate was stationed at Cadiz, five years ago, when a powerful fleet and army were being assembled there, to be sent across the Atlantic and subdue the rebellious colonists of South America and the Kingdom of New Spain.

"But the army of Cadiz was filled with dismay by the return of some oversea veterans stricken with yellow fever, and seduced by the crafty wiles of treacherous conspirators. The troops refused to embark and rose in mutiny. The seamen were hanging in the balance, and a civil conflict seemed impending, when young

Lieutenant de Guevara, a secret but ardent Liberal, raised the cry of revolt from the quarter-deck. His example inspired the crew of the frigate; their action in turn decided the whole fleet to pronounce for the revolution.

"De Guevara was held in high honor during the next three years, until the collapse of the rebellion forced him to flee to England. Thence he proceeded to Jamaica, in order to be as near as possible to his widowed mother and his sister Inés. He was still infatuated with Liberal doctrines, and involved himself in the conspiracy here in Cuba which our governor has just discovered and crushed.

"The captured correspondence of the ringleaders has revealed the fact that three months ago Don Enrique de Guevara paid a secret visit to Cuba, where he was concealed and harbored by his family. For that, their estates have been declared forfeit to the Crown. Doña Benita, the mother, and her daughter Inés, would have been imprisoned and perhaps condemned to death on a charge of treason had they not been warned in time to flee from their home.

"To-night those innocent and delicately nurtured ladies are being hunted like wild beasts

through the jungle where they are hiding, attended only by two faithful Zambo slaves. You have just seen the huntsman, the zealous Captain Acuna, ride forth to track them down. As the King's officer, I am sworn to render him every assistance. But I am a man, Don Daniel — and I love Inés de Guevara."

His voice broke with emotion. For a while, they sat in silence, until at length Don Pablo was able to speak again.

"How glorious is yonder moon. It will be at its full two days from now, when you, Don Daniel, are to sail from Havana. Your course will carry you past Miramar. Would it be possible for you to sail as close in as, say, within a mile of the shore?"

"Perfectly feasible," agreed Upton. "Deep water all along here."

"And at what hour could we expect to sight your topsails?"

"That depends on the wind, of course. With ordinary luck, I ought to be able to pass this point somewhere in the late afternoon or early evening."

"You will, of course, be keeping a sharp lookout," continued Don Pablo. "You could not

fail to perceive a boat — even a very small one — lying directly in your course? "

"Not likely," said the American, "unless the people in it failed to show a light after dark."

"But there will be no darkness on that night, Don Daniel. Here in Cuba the full moon rises at sunset and sinks at sunrise."

"I'd forgotten that," admitted Upton. "We'll have our eyes peeled for the boat, and if it's there we'll see it."

"Should it perchance contain two hapless ladies, driven from their home —"

"Why, then, we'd take 'em aboard, of course, and give 'em a passage to Kingston. Hold on there!" added Upton, jumping out of his chair and taking cover behind it just in time to escape being kissed. "Hold on there a minute, Don Pablo. Can those two hapless ladies row a boat?"

"Certainly not, Don Daniel. But Ciro el Zambo, the faithful slave who attends them, has served for many years in the Spanish navy under Don Enrique de Guevara. An able seaman, a faithful servitor and a most marvelous cook is this Ciro el Zambo — but of an eccen-

tric and violent temper, and at times, insane."

"If he wasn't crazy, he wouldn't be a sea cook. And if he is one, then I'll fly to his rescue faster than anybody does to beauty in distress. A cook and a carronade are the two things we need most of all in the *Brotherly Love*. The way that dunderhead farm hand Joel Morse has been ruining the good victuals you've sent aboard is a sin and a shame."

"You jest, Don Daniel," smiled Don Pablo, "after the custom of your countrymen, but you cannot conceal the nobility of your heart. To you and to you alone would I entrust the protection of my Inés — Inés of my soul. Ah, Don Daniel —"

"Hold on a minute! Here's another point. What sort of protection can I give her, in an unarmed ship in pirate waters? You know and all Havana knows, that the only guns we have aboard the *Brotherly Love* are those two wooden dummies. And every pirate who has a friend in Havana knows it too, by this time. If the local buccaneers aren't laying for us between here and Kingston, then they don't know their trade.

"I mentioned a cook and a carronade, just

now, as the things we needed most. Well, seeing that the ladies are bringing a cook with them, why not send them off in a barge or a lighter instead of a small boat, with a couple of these fine guns of yours and some round shot, bar and grape?"

"Impossible, Don Daniel," said Estrada firmly. "The exportation of ordnance from Cuba is most strictly forbidden."

"So I've heard," answered Upton dryly. "But how about the exportation of fugitives from justice? If you're willing to wink one eye at the law, why not the other?"

"It requires only one man to row two ladies in a skiff but many to load two culverins into a barge," replied Don Pablo, simply.

Upton had to admit to himself that this was true. After all, Don Pablo could hardly go about the business publicly without making himself a fugitive from the law. And if he and the ladies were willing to run the risk of Doña Benita and Inés de Guevara's going to Jamaica in an unarmed ship, should Upton leave them to be hunted through the jungle by Captain Acuna?

"It shall be done as you wish," the lieutenant

promised. "But may the Lord protect us from the Black Bloodhound!"

"Do not trouble yourselves, Don Daniel, for the Black Bloodhound will never attack you and your present crew."

"And why not?"

"Because you are of the Navy of the United States."

"Many thanks for the compliment, Don Pablo, but let's look the facts in the face. A dozen men with muskets would stand a mighty poor chance in a naval action against seventy men with a dozen heavy guns."

"True," admitted Don Pablo. "But the Black Bloodhound has invariably refused to fight the American Navy."

"He's never fought anything but helpless merchantmen, the cringing, cowardly cur!" exploded Upton. "I've seen his work, and it would shame the Pit, but why should he hesitate to attack so feeble a force as my prize crew?"

"Because of the uniform you wear and the flag you fly, Don Daniel. Time and again, I assure you, the Black Bloodhound has fought and conquered in the face of heavy odds. But

twice, when the odds were in his favor, has he not yielded to the merest show of force on the part of your navy?"

"When on earth did he ever do that?" asked the bewildered Upton.

"In 1814, at Barataria, and again, seven years after, at Isla Galvez."

"Do you mean that in your opinion the Black Bloodhound is —?"

"The Smuggler of Barataria," declared Don Pablo solemnly. "The Pirate of the Gulf, the famous Jean Lafitte."

"Impossible!"

"But why impossible, Don Daniel? When was it that the Black Bloodhound first appeared?"

"In the fall of 1821."

"Precisely — soon after the *Enterprise* had broken up Lafitte's settlement at Isla Galvez. Because there were no charges against him of attacking American ships and because of his great services to your government in the late war with England, Lafitte was permitted to go free. Where did he go? What has become of Jean Lafitte?"

"That is indeed a question which has often been asked," said Upton.

"And which I can answer," replied Don Pablo. "Jean Lafitte has gone back to his old trade of piracy on the high seas. Some day he will throw off his present disguise, to return to New Orleans, a rich and respected citizen."

Upton shook his head.

"Jean Lafitte is an outlaw, with plenty of sins on his soul, but never a stain of meanness or cruelty. For one and the same man to be what Lafitte has been and to do what the Black Bloodhound has done — well, it's flatly impossible. It simply isn't in human nature."

"You are too romantic, Don Daniel," declared the Spaniard. "You are blinded by the rosy mists of fable and popular delusion. You do not know this grim and ruthless pirate as I do, who have been his prisoner. I tell you, Don Daniel, that the vengeful cruelty of Jean Lafitte is as boundless as his daring. And what is there that Jean Lafitte will not dare?"

Sinking his voice to a whisper, Don Pablo looked more intently than ever across the lagoon and out through the opening between the two headlands to the moonlit sea beyond. So he had

been gazing almost all the evening, as though he more than half expected to see a black hull come silently gliding in through the harbor mouth.

Upton noted his host's expression and thought of the escort on the road, and the guard at the gate, the stakes in the harbor and the guns ready-primed on the seaward wall. Over the guarded strength and the moonlit splendor of Miramar hung the black shadow of fear.

CHAPTER XII: *The Refugees*

We're homeward bound to Kingston town,
  Good-by, fare you well, good-by, fare you well,
We're homeward bound with sugar and rum,
  Hurrah! my boys, we're homeward bound.

ALL chanties were forbidden in the navy, where the only working music was the piping of the bosun's silver whistle. That was all very well on a frigate or ship-of-the-line, where three or four hundred men could be put in one gang at a time. But for a small prize crew, breaking out the mudhook on a packet as big as a corvette, there was need of a song at the capstan.

So old Barbary Jones, who had been a chantey man in the merchant service, raised " Homeward Bound ", and the rest came in on the chorus.

Homeward bound, that joyful sound,

sang Barbary Jones.

Good-by, fare you well, good-by, fare you well,

roared the rest of the crowd.

We'll heave on the capstan and make it spin round,
Hurrah! my boys, we're homeward bound.

Homeward bound and our sails we will set.
Good-by, fare you well, good-by, fare you well;
Good-by to the girls on the pier with regret.
Hurrah, my boys, we're homeward bound.

At the first strains of "Homeward Bound", the big man in white civilian clothes, who had been aimlessly pottering about the spar deck of the *Brotherly Love,* started like an old troop horse at the sound of a cavalry trumpet. His feet began to stamp in time, his hands clenched an imaginary capstan bar, his lips moved with the song, while a sudden light gleamed in his dark gray eyes, gleamed and was gone, like a star seen on an overcast night, between two scudding clouds.

The gray eyes dulled again to a vacant stare, the thick-calloused hands relaxed and hung half closed by the big man's side as he went sham-

bling across the decks. Neither the bluejackets, straining at the capstan bars, nor their officers, paid any attention to "Johnny Scarface."

That was the nickname the prize crew had given him — the man they had found in the cabin cupboard, the sole survivor of the packet's company. Scorched, flayed and tortured until his mind had given way beneath the intolerable pain, the man had lost all power of thought or memory or coherent speech. He was strong and hale again, now that his wounds had healed, but they had left him hideously scarred.

His face was one huge cicatrice. The great scars about his mouth had twisted his lips apart and awry, revealing his teeth in a perpetual, sneering, sardonic grin, in startling contrast to the puzzled, helpless, pleading look in the lack-luster eyes.

A gentle, harmless idiot, Johnny Scarface was allowed to roam as he pleased about the ship. He had a way of stopping to finger any object that caught his attention, such as a coil of rope, the capstan pawl, or a new plate on the cabin table, as if he were trying to remember what it was. He was perpetually staring at the strange faces and unfamiliar uniforms of the

prize crew; ever seeking, ever failing to find his lost shipmates, his own lost self.

Yet somehow he always managed to keep himself out of the way of the men working the ship. His instinct for keeping clear at the proper time, together with the callouses on his palms and the way he kept his hands half-closed, as if they had been molded into curves by long years of hauling sheets and bowlines, his trick of glancing aloft and then around the horizon as soon as he came on deck, and many other little indications, all showed that he had been no passenger but a seaman. Also, the way he kept himself aft, and would sometimes turn out and walk the quarter-deck of the anchored ship as if taking a watch, convinced the navy men that Johnny Scarface had been either one of the mates or else the skipper of the *Brotherly Love.*

Whenever any one spoke to him, he would listen patiently, but evidently without the least comprehension. Since the first day, when he had called on " Abner " and " Ida ", and quoted a few words of Scripture, his silence had remained unbroken. But the sound of the chantey set up strange sympathetic vibrations in the dumb man's brain. Another minute, another

verse, and the already trembling barrier might have fallen.

But just then, Essex Jackson decided that the cable, now at twelve fathoms hemp in four fathoms of water, had been brought to a sufficiently "short stay" or proper scope.

"'Vast heaving!" he shouted. "Pawl the capstan! Stopper the cable and unship bars."

"Stations for loosing sail," ordered Lieutenant Upton. "Lay aloft sail loosers."

There was no more singing. Smartly but silently, navy fashion, the prize crew set sail, braced up the after yards, set the head sails abox, manned the capstan bars once more and hove around.

"Anchor a-weigh!"

"Man the jib and flying-jib halliards."

The fore-topsail paid her head around, the wind being fair for standing out of harbor. With headsails hoisting away, and the helm a-lee for sternboard, the anchor was hove up to the bows, catted and fished. The helm was righted, the head yards braced around, the spanker set, and the *Brotherly Love* was standing out to sea.

Both the *Isla Esmeralda* and the *Flash* had

put out, almost at the same time, the day before, while Upton had been returning from his visit to Miramar. Hardly had the Hispano-Hibernian gunboat passed Morro Castle and set a course to the westward, than the British frigate abruptly made after her, following the white schooner's wake in a way that caused some surprise and gossip in Havana.

This news, when repeated to Upton, made him ask himself whether Sir Maurice Fitz-Maurice was sharing Lieutenant Brown's belief that Don Patricio Dugan was the Black Bloodhound. Whether the English captain was acting on this theory or not, his action was typically arrogant and futile. If Sir Maurice credited Dugan with being a loyal officer of King Ferdinand's, then to hold him close in chase, within his own territorial waters, was to say the least, very unmannerly.

On the other hand, supposing the Englishman to suspect the Irishman of double-dealing, then the most he could hope for, by trailing him so openly, would be to keep him inactive and ostentatiously virtuous. And if these suspicions were baseless and Dugan true to his duty — then both warships would be close together and un-

able to come to her help, should the *Brotherly Love* be attacked anywhere between Havana and Guardiana Bay.

Considering these matters and the well advertised helplessness of his command, Upton clapped on sail and kept a sharp lookout. But an apple-bowed sugar drogher and a couple of dingy little coasting sloops were the only craft they sighted after leaving Havana until, in the first dogwatch, they raised the mouth of Miramar Lagoon.

"Small boat standing out, sir," hailed the lookout from the fore crosstrees.

Bowling along before the offshore breeze came a square white dot which, seen through the telescope, looked like somebody's bedspread or tablecloth set on a primitive homemade mast and yard in the bows of a dugout canoe. A mile from land and a little to leeward of the approaching ship, the boatman doused his mast and sail, stood up and began to wave a dirty white rag on the end of a crooked stick.

The *Brotherly Love* dipped her ensign to let the refugees know that they had been seen, then backed her topsails and lowered her lee gangway. It was a nice, broad gangway, especially

designed for lady passengers. But the three women in the dugout would have none of it.

The more they looked at the gangway grating, now buried in three feet of green water, now dripping a yard above them, as the packet rolled in the short beam sea, the closer they huddled together and the harder they prayed to the saints. In vain did the boatman, standing up like a gondolier, keep cleverly bringing his little horse trough of a dugout close under the vessel's lee and exhort the señora, the señorita, or cross-eyed Pepita the maid, to arise and step forth without fear, since danger there was none.

He, at least, looked thoroughly at home as he stood there, easily wielding his ponderous hardwood paddle and gripping the rough-hewn bottom of the dugout with toes that clung like fingers. His bare splay feet and naked torso were as black as any African's, but his high cheek bones and craggy nose were Indian. His hair might have been either kinky or straight, for it was hidden by a crimson kerchief bound pirate-wise about his head. That and a tattered pair of cotton trousers were all he wore. A short, broad-bladed, rusty machete was thrust through the rope that served him for a belt.

Around his neck clung a tiny, Central American monkey, its wrinkled face staring up at the ship, the fur of its rounded back an incredible shade of tawny orange.

"Lower away the gig," commanded Upton, impatient at the delay. "Pick up the ladies and turn that chopping bowl adrift."

Large deft hands suddenly scooped up the three astonished women, much as they gathered in the refugees' bundles of dunnage, from the dugout into the gig. Snatching up his own very compact kit, the black boatman came overside with the nimbleness of his own monkey. He faced aft and knuckled his forehead, in proper navy fashion, but his eyes were wild and rolling.

"I am Ciro el Zambo," he announced pompously, "the King of the Sea Cooks. Shall I show my art, O *Señor Teniente?*"

"Make it so," affirmed Upton, indicating the galley.

Ciro el Zambo grinned and was busy with the coppers before the yard tackles had been hooked and the gig hoisted in. Engrossed in his cooking, he paid no attention either to the dugout drifting away to leeward, or to the loud laments

of his mistress, the indisposed and portly Señora de Guevara.

"Ah, *Dios,* I am ill," she groaned as they lifted her down over the rail to the heaving deck. "It is all of an earthquake, without and within. Put me back ashore and let them hang me!"

She was a load for the two stalwart seamen who carried her, under Upton's direction, down the companionway and laid her on the berth in the lieutenant's own quarters, which he was giving up to the ladies. He considered this a cheap generosity on his part, for he intended to go below as little as possible, until they were safely clear of the pirate-infested Cuban coast. In the meanwhile, he would snatch what sleep he could on a mattress, under the quarter-deck awning.

Supper time came, and with it, the solemn ceremony of the lieutenant's tasting and passing upon the food prepared for the crew. It was black bean soup, originally compounded and put on to boil by Joel Morse, whose last attempt at this dish had turned out as black and briny as a bucket of sea water that has been used for sponging out a gun.

But Ciro el Zambo had caught this kettleful in time to perform a culinary miracle.

"Prime!" pronounced Upton, smacking his lips over the official spoonful. "Fit for the cabin table."

"It has pleased the palate of the High Admiral of Spain," boasted the haughty Ciro, as the lieutenant handed him back the spoon.

A flash of gray and orange shot down the length of the sea cook's bare black arm. Perched on his master's wrist, the monkey snatched the spoon from his fingers and sucked greedily at the film of soup still sticking to the bowl.

Four bells!

Essex Jackson came on deck at the change of watch; came with regretful backward look down the companionway.

"And I've got to walk up and down, a-chawin' sangwidges for my supper," he growled as he went on watch. "Wait till you see the fancy treat that black heathen has been cookin' and that cross-eyed wench has been settin' on the table for you, sir."

The cabin table was elaborately set for two,

with the best of the new silver and porcelain that had been sent aboard by Don Pablo Estrada. The wind had fallen and the sea moderated, so that the elaborate pyramid of fruit rode safely in its silver dish, the red Spanish wine washed gently to and fro in the decanters, and the three tall wineglasses at each place rubbed and tinkled musically.

Pepita, the cross-eyed Zambo maid, stood ready to ladle out the soup that had pleased the palate of the High Admiral of Spain. Broiled pompano, chicken San Coche, and other noble dishes, covered and set in pans of boiling water, crowded the sideboard.

It was a splendid feast to set before a simple sailor. But Upton hardly saw it, nor could he remember afterward whether or not he had swallowed a single mouthful. For as he was coming down the companionway, out from the door of his own stateroom stepped Inés de Guevara.

He had hardly noticed her when she came aboard, her figure buried in a shapeless, rusty black dress, her head swathed and her face three-quarters hidden by a yellowy-white mantilla. He had wondered, carelessly, why she was not

wearing a black one, like every other Spanish woman. But now he saw the reason.

Inés de Guevara was entitled to wear a white mantilla, for she was a *rubia* — a Spanish blonde. Her hair was like fine-drawn gold, as yellow and lustrous as the tiny wires in the filigree cross that hung at her throat.

She was all in white, from the great carved ivory comb in her golden hair to the little white kid sandals cross-strapped over her silken insteps. Why she had burdened herself with such vanities while being hunted through the jungle by the Guardia Civile, or how she had ever brought that dress aboard in a bundle, without crumpling a single flounce or ruffle, were practical questions for which there was no room whatever at that moment in Upton's astounded mind. All he could perceive was the general effect, and it bowled him over like a solid shot.

She made him a stately curtsey, which he acknowledged with a belated and awkward bow. In courtliest Castilian phrases, like the soft chiming of silver bells, she poured out her gratitude to him for saving her mother and herself from persecution and the imminent peril of cap-

tivity or death. Her words and the look of admiration she bent upon him took the bashful and unprepared Dan Upton flat aback.

No woman had ever treated him like this before. A gallant officer in storm or action, he was anything but a gallant among the ladies. He worshipped them in the abstract, after the sentimental fashion of the age, and devoured Moore and Byron in his watch below. He even memorized whole stanzas and short poems, though he had never yet screwed up his courage to quotation point.

The thing that depressed him most about these poets was the steel engravings of their handsome heroes. The more Dan Upton studied them, the more clearly he saw himself as a homely, insignificant-looking little man who, even with the aid of a uniform and a war record, had never been able to make the least impression on any of the belles of Kennebunkport.

And now the most beautiful woman he had ever seen or dreamed of was gazing soulfully up at him and hanging upon his words, as if he were one of those pale, fascinating Byronic youths with raven curls and a look of mysterious melancholy. Inés said little and listened much.

She knew the great feminine secret of encouraging a man to talk about himself.

Being less of an egotist than most men, Upton tried to learn something of her own adventures.

"Don Pablo has told me, *señorita,* how you and your mother have been forced to hide like runaway slaves in the depths of the forest," he said sympathetically, as soon as they were seated at the table.

"Don Pablo is very ridiculous," declared Inés. "We were never without a roof to shelter us or a mule to ride on. Our good friends took turns in hiding us and misleading our pursuers. As soon as he had rid himself of those Guardias Civiles, Don Pablo knew where to send us an invitation. Since then, we have been his guests at Miramar."

"He is a true *caballero,*" said Upton loyally.

"But only a soldier," replied the girl with dainty disdain.

"Now, if I were a man, I would be a sailor like my brother Enrique, or yourself, Don Daniel. I have heard that you have done great deeds upon the sea. Will you not tell me of your so-famous exploits?"

"G-good Lord!" stammered Upton, turning

a shade redder than the *vino tinto.* "I've never done anything to spin a yarn about, compared to some other chaps. Take my first officer, old Essex Jackson. They call him that because he went around Cape Horn with Porter in the *Essex,* back in 1813."

"Por-r-taire?" inquired the mystified young lady, rolling the strange name under her tongue. "But, yes — your American admiral who fights the pirates. But why did he go around Cape Horn?"

"I'll show you," volunteered the delighted Upton.

The rest of the meal was a monologue on Porter's famous cruise in the Pacific and the battle in Valparaiso Bay, illustrated with a chart traced on the damask tablecloth with the tine of a fork, and with three bits of breadcrust representing the *Essex, Phoebe* and *Cherub.* By the time the action was over, supper was finished and Pepita was menacing all three ships with a crumb brush.

"Let us sit over here by the stern windows while she clears the table," suggested Inés. "Will you not smoke, Don Daniel?"

He declined with a shudder. The idea of

smoking a cigar in the same cabin with so divine a creature was simply sacrilegious.

"Then," said the divine but practical creature, "since no fire is needed, do thou, Pepita, when thou hast finished, extinguish all the candles. Why waste good wax when there is so clear a moon?"

It was the night of the full moon. Low in the eastern sky, it shone directly in through the cabin windows. Astern, where the ship's wake blended into the moon's path, the sea was a vision of splendor and glory.

But Inés de Guevara was not looking at the moonlit Caribbean. She sat with half-averted face and downcast eyes, while Upton, sitting beside her on the narrow transom, saw nothing but the pure beauty of her face in the moonlight. How long they sat there, while he gazed and worshipped in silent adoration, he could not tell.

Glancing timidly up at him from beneath her deep-fringed, half-lifted eyelids, she murmured reproachfully, "Have you nothing to say, Don Daniel?"

To find words fit to express his surging emotions and translate them into Spanish, was utterly beyond him that moment. Like many an-

other young man of the period, he fell back on Byron:

There be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmed ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming
And the lull'd winds seem dreaming;

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep;
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

"And what do those verses signify, Don Daniel?" she asked demurely.

"*Hay ninguna de las hijas de belleza*—" he began, when there came an imperious interruption:

Cling-clang! Cling-clang! Cling-clang! Cling-clang!

Eight bells! Time to go on deck and take the first watch. His two hours below had passed like two minutes. Now that they were gone, he realized that such a time and such an opportunity would never come again.

To-morrow, Señora de Guevara would be up and about, keeping a vigilant and suspicious eye on all who came near her daughter. For a young man to sup, unchaperoned, with a well-born young Spanish lady, and then sit alone with her in the moonlight, was too monstrous a breach of Castilian etiquette to occur again this side of Judgment Day. Never could he declare his love, except in a due and formal proposal of alliance, made through the heads of their respective families.

There was no time for any such cumbersome nonsense. There was no time for even the briefest speech. Revolting at the thought of delay and weary of words, Upton put his lips to a better use.

Inés shrank back from his kiss with a look of horror and dismay. Her beautiful face was contorted with fear and loathing. She seized the little gold cross at her throat and held it out before her with a trembling hand, as if to

ward off some evil spirit. She opened her lips to scream, but could make no sound save the whispered prayer, "*Retro me, Satanas!*"

Gasping these fearful words, Inés de Guevara swayed and fell fainting on the cabin floor.

CHAPTER XIII: *Johnny Scarface*

"IDA! Thee is not dead! Thee is not dead!"

A strange, deep voice, vibrant with strongly repressed emotion, sounded in Upton's ears. A heavy body brushed past, forcing him back upon the transom again, as he was in the act of springing up to succor the fainting Inés.

Another man was kneeling beside her, with his bent back turned toward Upton, as the lieutenant rose angrily to his feet. By the set of the massive shoulders under the white civilian coat, he recognized Johnny Scarface.

"Get up and go to your quarters," commanded Upton indignantly, clapping his hand on the other's shoulder. "You are frightening the lady."

But the kneeling man paid no attention to him whatever. He had gently raised the bowed head of the unconscious Inés and was gazing intently into her face.

"Thee is not dead," he pronounced slowly. "But thee is not Ida. Who are —?"

Here Upton, hooking his hands under the big man's armpits, heaved him up on his feet. Pivoting as nimbly as a prizefighter but without raising a hand, Johnny Scarface stared down into the little lieutenant's angry, upturned face.

"Friend," he inquired gently, "who is this young woman?"

The anger fled from Upton's mind, expelled by a rush of horror that left him for a moment incapable of speech. He was well used to seeing those scarred, distorted features by the light of day, but the pallid moonlight intensified their Satanic leer and tinged them with a weird, unearthly hue, until it seemed the face of no mortal being but that of a grinning demon from the Pit.

No wonder that Inés, seeing that awful countenance gloating at her over her lover's shoulder, had clutched her cross and fainted. And fainting, she had fallen in a sitting posture on the floor, with her back against the angle of the bulkhead, her head thrown forward and her left arm outstretched along the edge of the transom. Except that her golden head was bowed, instead

of being thrown back, she was lying in almost exactly the same position as that other fair young girl whom Upton had found there when he came aboard.

Vividly it brought back to his memory the image of that unknown woman, dead in her youthful beauty, with her head thrown back defiantly and the stab wound through her heart. At the same time, as he was forcing himself to look steadily at Johnny Scarface, Upton realized that the gray eyes looking back at him out of that fixed and monstrous mask were no longer those of an idiot, but the eyes of a sane, intelligent man.

Johnny Scarface, too, had remembered! The sight of Inés lying there before him had recalled the memory of the one whom he called Ida. Therewith came crowding the recollection of other things that had been forgotten.

Johnny Scarface, having failed to receive any answer to his question, fell to studying the man before him. He reached out and fingered the third brass button on Upton's uniform coat. Again he had found something that connoted something else.

"Thee is from the frigate?" he inquired, in

the plain speech and calm, courteous tones of a member of the Society of Friends.

"Yes, I'm from the *Constellation*," answered Upton, his late resentment and later horror dissolving into a sort of awe. They had been shipmates for nearly a fortnight, and now this man was acting as if they had just met for the first time. That, and the look of him, were enough to give anybody the creeps!

"Then will thee tell me—?"

"Just a minute and I'll talk it all over with you," promised Upton. "But right now, I must take this young lady to her mother."

He picked her up and carried her in his arms, as he had once carried Johnny Scarface, across the cabin to the door of the captain's room. He kicked gently against the bottom panel with the toe of his boot.

"Who knocks?" demanded the suspicious voice of the Zambo maid.

"I, the lieutenant. Open, Pepita, for the señorita has need of thee."

The bolt rasped back and the stateroom door opened a cautious three inches. Through the narrow crack, Upton caught a glimpse of a burning night-light in a saucer of water, and

the mighty bulk of Señora de Guevara, heaving unhappily beneath the tumbled bedclothes of the bunk.

Then he met the look Pepita was giving him through the crack. At the sight of the señorita lying as if dead in the Yankee *teniente's* arms, Pepita flung the door wide open, snatched Inés from him like a doll, gave Upton a final, ferocious, strabismic glare, banged to and bolted the door.

When Upton rejoined Johnny Scarface, he found the Quaker looking out of the stern window at the unclouded moon. Hearing the door slam and the lieutenant come walking toward him, Johnny Scarface turned and made a slow and thoughtful observation.

"Friend, one of two things is certain. Either the moon has waxed overnight from the first quarter to full, or else some ten days have passed, of which I remember nothing."

"It will be just ten days to-morrow," said Upton, "since we sighted this ship at sunrise, with her topmasts carried away and the *Black Bloodhound* standing by."

Johnny Scarface nodded and raised his eyes to the deck beams overhead.

" They had put out the candles, for the dawn had come, and there was a pattern of light and shade, very fine and delicate, shifting and playing about the cabin ceiling. I knew it for the reflection of the sunbeams on the broken water astern.

" Friend, does thee know the village of Blockley, not far from Philadelphia? My father was miller there, in President Washington's time, and our dwelling was part and parcel of the mill. Very often, when I was a boy, would I wake to see just such a swaying and swirling of lights and shadows thrown up on the beams of the attic where I lay, by the sunbeams striking the boiling mill race. Such thoughts are but vanity and idleness. Yet by fixing my mind upon these innocent and pleasant things, I was the better able to endure what the Man in the Black Mask was doing to me with his knife point and pan of gunpowder, while four of his men were holding me naked and helpless here on the cabin floor.

" He gave over, and made a sign to the Spanish seaman who was holding my right arm to repeat the question. He, the masked man, their captain, never said a word. The blasphemies

of his men were terrible, but not so terrible as his silence.

"'Weel you tell? Weel you tell now?' the Spaniard asked me, in his poor English.

"'Am I not still in my Father's house and in His keeping?' I answered. And then came a cry from the deck: *'Una fregata! Una fregata!'*

"The pirate captain ran up on deck to see for himself. Soon the alarm was repeated, so that his men became agitated and ran after him, leaving me unguarded and alone, but very weak, for I had lost much blood.

"Yet mine was but a few drops of the blood that had been poured out on this cabin floor, where five Christian men, bound and helpless, had been slaughtered like sheep by the Man in the Black Mask. Their corpses, lying beside me, were a warning of what would be my own fate, should the arch pirate or any of his crew return and discover me.

"I remember rousing myself with the thought of finding a hiding place. I remember crawling aft on hands and knees, through a great warm pool of blood. I remember my whole brain and body burning like fire, as I stood on this very

spot looking down into that dear, dead face upturned to mine. And then, as it seemed, I saw her stir and breathe again. Yet it was not she but another. My body is healed but my mind is sore distressed. Friend, will thee have the kindness to tell me what has befallen?"

CHAPTER XIV: *Ida and Abner*

"MR. JACKSON, I owe you an apology," confessed Upton, as he took the deck.

Essex Jackson, being junior in rank though senior in years, could hardly retort, "You do!"

But he looked it.

When there are only two officers in a ship, so that they have to stand watch and watch throughout the voyage, they must share their scanty hours of rest and sleep as castaways share fresh water. Theoretically, each has twelve hours off in the twenty-four; actually, both may be on duty together, in foul weather or other emergency, for twenty — thirty — forty hours on end.

Even in fair weather, when a man has the chance to make up leeway on his sleep, to extend your watch below at the expense of the other fellow's is no light offense. Relief should be prompt, as the regulations ordain. But this time, Lieutenant Upton was nearly twenty minutes late.

"Fact is, Mr. Jackson," he explained, "our passenger has found his bearings. Remembers everything — or most of it."

"What!" gasped Essex Jackson. "Not Johnny Sc —"

He bit through the last word just in time. Although he had seen the man in white follow Upton to the poop he was so used to the imbecile's aimless wanderings that he would have paid more attention to the new cook's pet monkey.

"That reminds me, sir," said Upton, turning to the civilian. "You haven't told me your name yet, sir. This is Mr. Jackson, my second in command, Mr.—"

"Crispin," finished the Quaker, as he met Jackson's bone-crushing grip with an equally powerful though less aggressive grasp. "Captain Hosea Crispin, of this ship."

He looked forward along her familiar deck and aloft at the well-remembered spars. With a visible effort, he turned his eyes away from the cro'jack yard, to meet Jackson's gaze.

"I am indeed happy to greet thee, Friend Jackson, and thee, Friend Upton," he said with simple fervor, "who have been the Lord's in-

struments for saving my ship and my life. But surely, not mine alone?"

"Yours alone, I fear," sighed Upton. "We found no other survivor."

"The Lord's will be done," said the Quaker steadily. "We must not murmur against His decree. Yet, would that He had permitted thy ship to fall in with mine but a few hours sooner."

"Amen to that!" exploded Essex Jackson, with savage relish. "Twenty minutes earlier would ha' done it! Twenty minutes more of darkness, and we'd have caught the double-dashed dastards under our guns and blown 'em to brimstone!"

"Thee mistakes my meaning, Friend Jackson," the other admonished him. "I was thinking of the lives thee might have saved, not of the murders thee might have committed. And though this is no longer my quarter-deck but thine, still I say to thee as I would to any man, Take not the name of the Lord in vain."

"Hrrrumph!" snorted the astounded and wrathful old sea dog. "Can't strike a woman or a Quaker! G'night, sir."

Growling like a grizzly, he stumped off for his watch below, leaving Upton and Crispin to

walk the quarter-deck together. Ever, as they walked, the Quaker skipper kept glancing aloft at the starboard end of the cro'jack yard.

"We cut him down," said Upton gently, remembering how when he and the prize crew came aboard, they had found a dead man hanging from that yardarm. "We buried him with the rest: nineteen, all told. But surely you had more people than that aboard, Captain Crispin?"

"More than twice that number," he answered in a voice which, for all his abhorrence of showing emotion, was heavy with sorrow. "Fifty-four poor souls, entrusted to my keeping. It is not right that the captain should survive and the ship's company perish."

"Pray heaven they did all perish! Pray heaven they were all put to death then and there!" he added fervently.

"Why does thee wish that, Friend Upton?"

"Because I'm thinking of the women."

"There was only one woman aboard," declared Crispin. "And she was the first to die."

Upton whirled around and stared at the other's inscrutable face.

"Do you mean to tell me, sir?" he demanded

indignantly, "that that beautiful, refined young lady was permitted to take passage on this ship without female companionship of any sort — without even the stewardess which the law requires? What sort of a packet is this? Who are your owners?"

"The *Brotherly Love,*" replied Captain Crispin evenly, "is owned by Cartwright, Crothers and Hicks, of Philadelphia."

Upton was utterly bewildered. He knew the firm; everybody knew the famous firm of Cartwright, Crothers and Hicks. Forty tall ships flew their gray house-flag. They were shrewd, successful business men, of unshakable integrity and unswerving principles.

True to their creed, they had refused to arm their vessels or to loan the United States Government a cent, during the War of 1812. Instead, they had built and endowed a hospital for the sick and wounded. No less a personage than Henry Clay had been unable to book a passage on one of their coastwise packets, for the threefold reason that the Kentucky statesman held it beneath a gentleman's dignity to travel without his case of duelling pistols, his cellaret of choice Bourbon and peach brandy, and his black valet.

Rum, slaves and weapons of war were forbidden freight for Cartwright, Crothers and Hicks. Their skippers and mates had to maintain discipline without pistols, profanity or hazing — and they did. Hot cocoa was served out instead of grog, and nothing stronger than wine allowed on the cabin table. A passage in one of their packets might be a trifle dull, like the good ship herself, but eminently virtuous and respectable.

An unchaperoned lady in the cabin was as unthinkable as a barrel of gunpowder in the hold. Yet Upton had discovered both aboard the *Brotherly Love*. He had not forgotten the firm's war record, and the whole country had heard of its famous altercation with Henry Clay.

"Your owners seem to have suffered a change of opinions, lately," he observed.

"Thee must not misjudge them, Friend Upton," the Quaker skipper replied. "Thee cannot understand what has happened on this sad voyage until thee has learned something of what befell on the voyage before. We were then in the Western Ocean trade, plying between Philadelphia, Bordeaux, and Bristol. At the English port we took aboard, among other passengers, an

American family returning from an extended tour of Europe. They were Philadelphians, not members of the Society, but worldly folk, very wealthy and fond of gaiety and diversion.

"They had taken their daughter Ida with them to Europe, for the completion of her education. Her parents let it be known that she had been presented at court and acclaimed as the Toast of London. What this term may imply, I know not, but she was a comely young woman and very merry.

"The young men aboard fell down and worshipped her with idolatrous adoration—all save one. That was my second mate and nephew, Abner Lovejoy; an earnest and sober youth, with a passion for mathematics. He treated all women alike, with courtesy, but with no interest in them nor desire for their company."

"And his name," said Upton, smiling, "was Lovejoy."

"So it was frequently remarked," answered Crispin. "It seemed to afford no small amusement to the passengers. I overheard one offering to wager a beaver hat that Miss Ida would bring young Killjoy to heel before we dropped anchor in the Schuylkill. I took that person

apart and reminded him that gambling is strictly forbidden aboard our ships.

"After that, I heard nothing more on the subject. Nor could I perceive the least change in Abner, nor any overt tenderness between him and the young woman. They held some small converse together, but that seemed all. As the passengers went ashore at Philadelphia, I observed the one who had laid the wager hand over his new London-made beaver with an ill grace.

"Abner lodged at my home in Pine Street. The second morning after our return, the public post brought him a letter, sealed and prepaid, on scented paper and addressed in a fine feminine hand.

"'Is this from thy friend the Toast of London, Abner?' asked my wife, who had been questioning me about the voyage.

"'Nay, Aunt, it is not,' he answered.

"Since we knew him to be as truthful as he was taciturn we said no more. Many such letters came during the next few weeks. Abner posted his replies with his own hand and divulged nothing.

"In the meanwhile, Cartwright, Crothers and

Hicks decided on a venture to Mexico and the Spanish Main. The news had come that the Spanish troops had evacuated Vera Cruz and the coast towns of New Granada. There was promise of a most profitable market at Cartagena, Chagres, Vera Cruz and Tampico. But because of the dangers of fevers, pirates, and Spanish cruisers, the *Brotherly Love* was to carry none but male passengers and those only at their own risk. Abner drew out his savings to the last cent and invested them in goods on his own account. When my wife learned this, she could hold in no longer.

"'Thee is planning to set up housekeeping on thy expected profits, Abner,' she accused him over the supper-table. 'If thee does not wish me to lay the matter before next meeting, thee had better tell me all. When did thee and Ida become engaged? And who is this other minx with the perfumed notepaper?'

"Abner was fairly caught. What chance has a man with a woman at such a time? And yet, he and the girl had befooled every man and woman aboard the *Brotherly Love* by falling in love and plighting their troth without any one's suspecting it — her parents least of all.

"Her father was a man of wrath, a choleric old retired colonel of light horse, who would have seen his daughter laid in her grave rather than see her married to a Friend. They dwelt in a tall brick mansion in Rittenhouse Square, outside of which house Ida might not stir, either on foot or in the carriage, without an escort. She could neither send nor receive a letter, until after it had been read and approved by her father. He was a stern, unbending man, fond of describing himself as the master of his house.

"Yet the very children who played about his doorstep could have told him things that he never dreamed about his own house. They knew that the flat roof made an excellent playground, where one could not be seen from the street because of the cornice. Moreover, one could walk from roof to roof along that whole side of the square, since the houses were all of a height and built solidly wall to wall.

"It had not been many years since Ida had been a child. She remembered the way across the roofs and how to drop a weighted message down the proper flue, so that it would fall behind the embroidered fireplace screen in the room of

her dearest friend. That little body was on the watch, for she had seen the other family return and was eager to hear the news. Great news she must have heard indeed, when the two met for a midnight conference on the roofs, while both households were sound asleep, undisturbed by the light footfalls and the whispering overhead.

"The friend wrote faithfully to Abner, who replied through the same channels, telling his beloved of the new voyage and his hopes. If all went well, then they could be married on his return. In the meanwhile he bade her give no thought to her father's stubborn pride, nor to the differences between them in creed and station, but to compose herself in faith and patience.

"But Ida knew her father better than Abner did. She despaired of ever winning his consent to her marriage with a poor sailor and a Friend. So she ran away. Her girl friend let her down through the other house to the street and drove with her in a closed carriage to the docks. Many other women were there, poor souls, to bid farewell to their sons and husbands about to sail in the *Brotherly Love*.

"A lady of fashion, swathed in a Paisley shawl with her head in a bonnet and veil, looks much like any other lady so attired. Ida came aboard unnoticed among the rest, slipped into Abner's quarters and bolted the door. No one thought of looking for any one there, when the ship was cleared and the visitors sent ashore. Abner, of course, was busy on deck. We had dropped the pilot and cleared the Capes, when he turned to see his beloved before him, with her face like the glory of the dawn.

"'Ida!' I heard him cry. 'What is thee thinking of, to do this thing?'

"'That my place is beside my man, to share his perils,' she answered proudly. 'That I will not be bound by my father's wealth or his stubborn pride or the wrangles of church and creed. That we are at sea, where there is but one service and one law and that is the captain's. That is what I am thinking Abner.'

"She had remembered my saying, on the voyage from Bristol, that a ship's captain on the high seas has as much right and power to perform the marriage ceremony as any magistrate or minister ashore. We had the wedding that evening in the cabin. All the passengers gave

presents from their trunks and the crew from their sea chests. Ida's gift to Abner was the one thing she had taken with her from her father's house — her pocket Bible.

"Seven days they were married — seven days of joy and happiness. And then —"

Captain Crispin turned away to look up again at the starboard end of the cro'jack yard. He could say no more. Upton, however, needed no further explanation of what had happened. They had fallen in with the *Black Bloodhound,* probably towards sundown and fled through the night, not daring to shorten sail, but carrying too much canvas for the rising nor'easter. A sudden squall must have carried away all three of the packet's topmasts and left her a helpless wreck for the pirates to lay aboard.

A week of Paradise — a night of Hell!

"She died like a soldier's daughter," was Upton's tribute. "And Abner?"

The Quaker skipper pointed up to the block on the cro'jack yard.

"Three times they ran him part way up to the yardarm, then let him down and asked him if now he would tell. But Abner would not tell.

So they let him hang by the neck until he was dead."

"What was it that he would not tell?" asked Upton.

But Captain Crispin, instead of answering, turned away and went below.

CHAPTER XV: *Nightmare*

IT was eight bells — four o'clock in the morning, the end of the second watch. Upton had been walking the deck almost all night, consumed with anxiety because of the falling wind. In vain they had braced the yards and set every kite that would draw, until the stately packet was a towering glory of moonlit splendor. For all her beauty the *Brotherly Love* was a dull sailer in light airs, and they could not better her pace by a knot.

"As beautiful and helpless as a woman," Upton thought, as he looked at her idling canvas and empty gun ports. The phrase kept haunting him while he paced the deck, conning the pirate-haunted coast. As beautiful and helpless as Inés, the girl he loved; as beautiful and helpless as Ida, his countrywoman, who had found both love and death aboard this ship. Should the pirates attack them as they had before, what could he do but kill Inés with his own hand?

Toward morning, he flung himself on the mattress he had had spread on the poop, intending to snatch an hour's sleep before going on watch again. But he slept through the striking of the bell.

"Let him sleep, Friend Jackson," whispered Crispin, who had come topside again while Upton had been dozing. "I can keep the deck while thee goes below, until Friend Upton wakes. Or I can rouse him at once, should need arise."

"Make it so," acquiesced Essex Jackson.

He hesitated, with the idea of saying a word of apology for his former gruffness. Finding this too hard work, he gave a nod and a grunt instead and went below.

Captain Hosea Crispin again was walking the familiar quarter-deck of the *Brotherly Love*. He had no authority and gave no commands. Yet if he had absent-mindedly given an order, the chances are that it would have been obeyed. For Thirsty Jim Smiley had been listening to the officers' talk while he did his trick at the wheel, and had carried the story forward at the change of watch.

Every sailor in the prize crew had learned

who Johnny Scarface was and what he had suffered. The navy men looked at him with wonder and respect, not so much for the torture he had endured as for his daring to reprove old Essex Jackson for taking the name of the Lord in vain. The fo'c'sle agreed that somebody ought to make a forebitter about that, for Barbary Jones to sing when they rejoined the *Constellation.*

But there was still one man aboard the *Brotherly Love* who had not yet heard the news; a man who had never seen nor heard of Johnny Scarface. This was the refugee, Ciro el Zambo. Since he was the cook, he rated as an "idler", who kept no watch but had "all night in."

"Hit the deck, Ciro!" ordered Barbary Jones, acting bosun. "Time to start yer coppers a-b'ilin'."

The Zambo knew no English but he knew his trade. Soon smoke was pouring out of the galley stovepipe, and a savory smell of coffee — the best coffee grown in Cuba, prepared by the best cook afloat — brought joy to every nostril.

"This ain't goin' to be none o' Joel Morse's hogwash," murmured one shellback happily to

another. "Thar he goes aft with the sample cup."

Captain Hosea Crispin was unaware of the navy custom of having the men's food sampled by the officer of the deck. But he was exceedingly fond of coffee and accustomed to having a cup fetched aft for himself, whenever he felt the need. No one had thought of offering him any, during the past ten days. Now, at the first whiff of the fragrant smell, his whole system cried out for coffee like a drunkard's for alcohol.

Forgetting Upton's existence for the moment, and without the least intentional selfishness, the Quaker stepped forward to where Ciro el Zambo was standing at the mast.

"I thank thee, Friend," he said pleasantly, and held out his scarred hand for the cup.

Ciro had not seen or heard him approach, for he had been too busy preventing his pet monkey, who was with him as usual, from sticking its silly nose into the steaming cup. The task of fending off the attempted raid, without either scalding himself or spilling any of the coffee, had taken up all the cook's attention, both while laying aft and while waiting at the mast.

When he heard some one address him, Ciro

looked up and saw — the fearsome mask of Johnny Scarface! Lit by the rays of the sinking moon, now near its setting and shining right aft, the tortured features and twisted lips wore the grin of a floating fiend. It was the same horrible apparition that had frightened Inés into a swoon.

Ciro el Zambo did not faint, for he was decidedly no lady. But he was an ignorant, superstitious mixed breed with a bad conscience and an unsound mind. What he thought he saw was Satan himself, reaching for him with outstretched claws!

Ciro dropped the cup and sprang backward with a convulsive leap. He twisted about in mid-air like a falling cat, and came down facing forward and running full stride. At the same time, he gave a shriek of mortal terror that rang through the ship from stem to stern.

Roused by that fearful yell, Upton leaped from the mattress to the break of the poop. He saw the watch below come tumbling out of the foc's'le, even as Essex Jackson, pistol in hand, shot up out of the companionway like a jack-in-the-box. Upton could hear the three terrified women screaming in the cabin, between the louder screams of Ciro el Zambo, who was scud-

ding forward like a rabbit hunting its hole. In through the galley door he darted, banged to and bolted the door behind him.

The cook's voice was still plainly audible, however, as he raised it in fervent prayer to the blessed saints, imploring them to come very swiftly and save him from the Evil One. Ciro's petition and the spilled cup of coffee on the deck, at the feet of the bewildered Captain Crispin, told Upton what had happened.

"I ought to have had the fellow warned," he reproached himself. "Don Pablo told me that he was weak in the wits. It's only that crazy sea cook of ours, Mr. Jackson," he said aloud. "I'll settle him in a minute. Present my compliments to the ladies, please, and tell them not to be frightened, because it is only —"

He checked himself as Crispin stepped up, with his mild gray eyes looking perplexedly out from the sneering, Satanic mask of which he was so utterly unaware. Mirrors were scarce on the *Brotherly Love,* and he had not looked into one since the recovery of his memory.

Sooner or later he would have to be shown or told. But Upton had no heart to blurt out the truth just then.

"What'll I tell 'em," asked Essex Jackson. "I don't savvy much of the lingo, sir."

"Shout this through the keyhole, '*No es nada, Señoras. Uno marinero ha tenido una pesadilla.*'"

"Very good, sir," acknowledged the master's mate, saluted and went below. His rendering of the formula seemed to work, for after he had bellowed it twice outside the stateroom door, there was no more screaming from within.

But the screams from the galley continued.

"Begone, demon!" yelled Ciro el Zambo, at the thump of a fist on the galley door. "Saint Peter of Cordova, speed to my aid!"

"Be quiet, fool!" commanded Upton. "There are no demons here. It is I, the lieutenant. Cease howling and open the door."

"I know you, Satan; I know you!" raved the sea cook, with a horrible burst of blasphemy. "I will flee up the stovepipe and fly to the gangway of heaven. Make ready thy keys, St. Peter. I come! I come!"

"Just when we get a good cook, he has to go crazy," sighed Upton resignedly. "Have to break in and tie him up, I suppose, before he cuts his throat or sets the ship on fire."

"Let me have a try, sir," suggested Barbary Jones.

He hurled his hundred and ninety pounds of bone and muscle against the door, which creaked but held.

"It's a job for a broadax or a battering-ram," said the lieutenant. "Fetch one of those dummy guns, Barbary, have three or four hands take a run with it and ram the door down."

"Just a minute, sir," suggested Essex Jackson, who had come hurrying forward again to see the fun. "I've seen a crazy sea cook do wicked work with a cleaver, in my time. Better let me go first on the ramming party, with my right hand free, to parry, sir."

"Very sound suggestion, Mr. Jackson," approved Upton.

Jackson, who rated small-arms instructor in the *Constellation* and was one of the best swordsmen in the entire navy, half drew his regulation small sword, then shoved it back in the scabbard.

"Barlow, go to my room and fetch the big cutlass hanging back of the door," he directed.

While this was being done, Jackson turned to Upton.

"By the way, sir, what's a pesky dilly?" he inquired.

"A what?"

"A pesky dilly. The thing you told me to tell the ladies that somebody had had. Whatever it was, it worked fine."

"Oh, *una pesadilla.* That's Spanish for nightmare," translated Upton. "Handiest lie I could think of just then."

"And it wasn't no lie, but the truth, sir," said Jackson slowly. "For if this cruise ain't a nightmare, then what is?"

He took the cutlass that Barlow brought him and placed himself at the head of the battering party, with the square butt of the dummy gun tucked in the crook of his left arm. For the last time, Upton summoned the cook to open, but received no answer.

"Down with the door!" he ordered to the impatient ramming party.

Down it went like cardboard at the impact of the ram. Over it as it fell sprang Essex Jackson, on guard and ready. But he found no work for his blade. The cleaver was hanging on its proper nail; the cook was sitting on his stool, with his back to the door and his head and

shoulders sprawling face downward over the galley table.

"Dead!" pronounced Jackson, as soon as he laid a hand on the bent bare back. "And the monkey's dead, too! Now, what do you make of that, sir?"

"Let me see," said Upton, who had followed him into the galley.

By the light of the hanging whale oil lamp, he saw a pathetic little huddle of gray and orange fur, with its head in the tin cup that was still clutched in the cook's dead hand.

He lifted the tiny creature and turned it over. It was stone dead. Its eyes were closed, its grotesque little wrinkled face all daubed with coffee and streaked with a sticky yellowish slime.

"Been licking the sugar out of the cup," observed Upton. "Only this stuff isn't sugar. Sugar isn't yellow — and it doesn't kill. So that is what he meant by flying up the stovepipe to heaven. He put poison into his coffee and drank it off."

"That's what he must have done, sir," agreed Jackson. "And here's the little sack he carried the poison in."

He pointed to a small, empty bag of very fine,

very dirty linen that lay on the galley table. Upton picked it up, looked into it, then turned it inside out.

"See here, Mr. Jackson," he cried, on a note of suppressed excitement. "Look at the yellow dust clinging all over the inside of this sack. Do you realize what that means? This bag was full!"

"Yes, sir, I see," answered the master's mate politely.

"You don't see the half of it. How much would this bag hold when it was full up? A cupful at least, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, sir. At least a cupful."

"And did this man eat a cupful of dry poison?" demanded the lieutenant.

"Why no, sir. It's plain to see by looking at it, his cup was full of coffee before he drank it."

"But there's no poison left over — and two cupfuls can't occupy the same space at the same time. He simply couldn't have emptied the sack of poison into his cup — but he could have emptied it *into the pot.*"

"Good — Lord — Almighty!" gasped Essex Jackson, staring with horrified eyes at the great

copper kettle of fragrant coffee that was bubbling on the galley fire. "He meant to kill us all!"

"Heave the stuff overboard!" ordered Upton. "No, hold on! We'll seal it up and have it analyzed by the English authorities at Kingston. in the meanwhile —"

"Sail ho!" came a hail from the bows.

"Where away?" demanded Upton, as he started for the galley door.

"Broad off the larboard bow. Large tops'l schooner coming about the point, sir."

Upton ran to the port gangway and looked forward. The moon was setting, its lower limb just touching the surface of the tranquil sea. Rugged and black against the great white disk showed the tip of an outthrust promontory, feathered with tiny palm trees.

Out from behind the cape was gliding a lean black craft, with every sail and tapering spar silhouetted against the moon.

"Friend," whispered Captain Crispin in Upton's ear, "that is the *Black Bloodhound.*"

CHAPTER XVI: *Hand to Hand*

LIKE a scuttled ship the moon sank into the sea. But already the east was ruddy with the coming of the dawn. As Don Pablo Estrada had reminded Upton, there was no darkness on the night of the full moon.

But the level rays of the rising sun, streaming across the Caribbean, were warming the surface layer of air faster than they could heat the night-chilled land and water. All Cuba and the surrounding ocean steamed like a boiling pot. The mist hung low, blanketing the sea and hiding the schooner's sinister black hull from Upton's eyes, as she came about on the port tack and headed directly for the *Brotherly Love.*

Then a puff of the warm south wind brought a great rolling cloud of vapor, the "Creeping Johnny" from the swamps ashore, to mingle with the sea mist and form a fog that blotted out everything beyond half a pistol-shot. It blinded the pirate and gave the merchantman the option

of carrying on and slipping past unseen, or else putting back to Havana or running free to seaward. She had all sail set, and apparently a heaven-sent chance to escape.

But Upton had no delusions on that score. He knew that long before they could run out of sight in any direction the sun would have mounted high enough to drink up the morning mist and reveal them to their foes. And if the schooner had been able to run down the ship in a gale of wind, when all the chances should have been in favor of the square-rigger, then the swift corsair ought to be able to sail rings around the dull packet in light airs.

There would be no escape if they fled nor any mercy if they struck. The only thing to do was to fight, and the first step was to take in sail. The tall white pyramids of canvas melted away even faster than did the fog bank, when it presently began to be burned away by the rays of the rising sun.

By the time the *Black Bloodhound's* mastheads poked up into the sunlight, the packet's royal and topgallant masts and yards had been sent down, and all sails furled except jib and forestaysail, topsails and spanker. She was

cleared for action, in so far as she was prepared to fight at all. The two dummy guns were run out over the bows, cutlasses girt on, and the muskets and boarding pistols loaded and primed.

"Got plenty of powder, anyway," observed Jackson. "So why not fix up some hand grenades out of empty bottles and such-like?"

"Good idea, if only we've got time to carry it out," approved Upton. "Break out that barrel of gunpowder you broached in the forehold, right away. How much powder have you aboard, Captain Crispin?"

"Five barrels," answered the Quaker skipper, "for the two fog signals."

"Fog signals!" echoed Upton, intensely interested. "To burn gunpowder? What sort of a noise do they make? Anything like a gunshot?"

"Very much like it, I should say, Friend Upton."

"Do you hear that, Mr. Jackson? Whereabouts are these machines stowed?"

"In the forehold, directly beneath the powder."

"Get 'em on deck, Mr. Jackson, as fast as the Lord will let you!" cried the lieutenant.

He turned and beamed at Crispin as if the Quaker had just lifted a heavy, spike-studded yoke from Upton's neck.

"If there's one thing we need more than another, it's that sort of a noise and plenty of it," he exclaimed. "Here I've been figuring how to make the *Black Bloodhound* open fire on us and so signal any cruiser that may be within hearing. What I've been afraid of was that the pirates wouldn't use their guns at all, but would simply lay us aboard, with their odds of four to one. Now, however, there'll be racket enough to rouse the neighbors, thanks to these new-fangled fog signals. Just what sort of contraptions are they, and who's buying them?"

"They are consigned to the Mexican naval authorities at Vera Cruz. The machines, so they have assured us, are to be sent to Alta California, where the fogs are a great menace to shipping. One is to be installed at Monterey and the other in the Bay of San Francisco."

"Humph!" commented the naval officer. "I hate to say this, Captain Crispin, but it sounds to me as if some one had been selling your owners a mess of fish. I've always heard that there was plenty of fog in Alta California, but

I've never heard of shipping anything there except round the Horn."

The Quaker said nothing, for he was too loyal to utter a word of criticism of his owners to any outsider. He had taken the shipment under protest, and at the orders of young Hicks, the junior partner, who was then temporarily in charge of the office — and who had been secretly speculating in Mexican bonds.

The sailors were whipping the powder barrels up out of the fore hatch. Two were on deck and the third on its way when a yell from the hands in the hold announced the discovery of the " fog signals."

" Carronades! Twenty-four pounders! Two carronades, with all their gear, tackle and carriages!"

" For Admiral Porter's Mexican navy at Vera Cruz," supplemented Upton. " Great day in the morning! How I did perjure myself at Havana, when I swore we hadn't a gun aboard. Suppose Don Pablo hadn't bobbed up to vouch for me, and the Collector had searched the ship. By the Lord Harry, the little scalawag was dead right! Well, there's another log gone downstream.

"Have you got any grape, round and bar shot to go with these — fog signals, Captain Crispin?"

"Thee knows that I have none of those commodities, Friend Upton," answered the Quaker with unshaken dignity. "Nor would I have accepted the shipment of the powder and the guns had I not been assured that they were to be used not for life-taking but for life-saving. Thee has no right to assume otherwise, Friend Upton."

The lieutenant felt his cheeks growing hot, and his temper also. These Friends certainly hit straight from the shoulder with their confoundedly "plain speech!" But he was sportsman enough to see and admit his error.

"You are right, sir, and I beg your pardon," he apologized. "You're not the sort of man to budge from your principles, whatever happens. But if the pirates attack us, this deck will be no safe place for a noncombatant. Hadn't you better join the ladies in the cable tier?"

That dark, unsavory cave below the waterline, walled in by coil on coil of foul-smelling hemp cable, would be the safest spot in the ship when the solid shot began to fly. There Inés, her mother and cross-eyed Pepita were huddled to-

gether, telling their beads with trembling fingers.

But the Quaker captain had no desire to join them.

"With thy permission, Friend Upton, I will remain and look after the wounded."

"That's the spirit!" cried the delighted Upton, as he wrung the Quaker's hand. "In the meanwhile, would it be against your principles to take the wheel? No? Then relieve the man at the helm and send him forward at once to bear a hand with the guns."

The guns! Two short twenty-fours made a feeble battery to set against the twelve short eighteens and the long thirty-two of the *Black Bloodhound*. With the last piece alone, the pirate could outrange and out-hit them both. But if he tried to close and board, with his odds of seventy to fourteen, then not all the hitting would be on one side.

Old Barbary Jones expressed the feelings of the entire crew when he threw his arms around the black muzzle of the first carronade as it was swayed up through the hatchway, and kissed its iron lip. Deftly they swung it over and lowered it on the slide of the wooden carriage, made fast the navel bolt, removed apron and tom-

pion, and swabbed the thick traveling coat of tallow from bore and touch hole.

"Where'll you have it, sir?" inquired Essex Jackson.

"Secure both guns amidships, just before the after hatch," directed the lieutenant. "So that when we see which side the fellow intends to take, we can bring both pieces to bear together. Have them ready, loaded and primed. Since there is no shot aboard, Mr. Jackson, set every one you can spare from this work to collecting langridge."

Bolts, spike nails, pieces of barrel hoop and other fragments of old iron were hastily gathered and tied up in canvas-wrapped cylinders to fit the bore of the guns.

"Would it be all right to use *new* iron, sir?" Abner Barlow inquired politely, when two such charges had been made ready. "I noticed two-three kegs marked 'Hardware' right under the powder in the forehold."

"Rouse 'em out and make langridge of 'em, whatever they be!" barked the master's mate. "Run Number Two aft and secure, alongside Number One."

"Have the guns covered with the boat sails,

Mr. Jackson," directed Upton. "Then serve out hardtack and water. Caution the men to keep quiet and out of sight. Fog's burning off fast — they'll raise us any minute now."

Not long after the word had been passed and the crew had begun to munch their flinty sea biscuit Upton saw the *Black Bloodhound* come gliding out of the thinning mist, a mile and a half astern. She had overrun them in the fog and circled to pick up the lost scent. Hand over hand she crept up on them now, ghosting along at three feet to the packet's one.

A smoke cloud puffed from the schooner's waist; a thirty-two pound ball groaned past overhead. Upton ignored this summoning shot and carried on, with no hope of escape but playing for time and praying for plenty of gunfire.

His prayer was answered with another round shot that passed through both topsails. Then the Long Tom ceased firing, as the *Black Bloodhound* followed directly in the wake of the *Brotherly Love*. In another quarter of an hour, she was within easy grape-shot range.

Watching her intently, Upton saw the schooner's head begin to fall off to leeward.

"Lash the wheel, Mr. Crispin," he ordered in a low voice. "Ready, Mr. Jackson?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"He's ranging up under our lee quarter. Flat on your faces, all!"

Dragging the reluctant Crispin down with him, Upton flung himself flat on the poop. A ragged broadside, so badly timed that he could distinguish four of the six reports, crashed from the *Black Bloodhound's* short eighteens. Through the quivering deck beneath him Upton could feel as well as hear the shattering of the cabin bulkheads and fittings, while grape-shot, langridge and long white splinters whistled and shrieked past overhead. A round shot carried away the binnacle, another clipped a single spoke from the steering wheel.

Upton sprang up and looked about him. He saw that most of the taffrail had gone to glory and that every plank on the poop had been scored by grapeshot. But neither he nor Crispin had received the slightest injury. As unperturbed as ever, the Quaker skipper stepped to the mutilated wheel and cast off the lashings.

"She still answers her helm, Friend Upton," he reported placidly.

evil about the aloof and slender figure of darkness that made the bestial brutishness of his crew seem warm and human. They were a hard-case, cruel lot, but they did not insult the sight of the sun and the sea.

The Black Bloodhound unfolded his arms and made a peremptory gesture with one dainty, black-gloved hand. Gasparilla nodded and repeated his hail.

"Heave to and send your boat aboard!"

He grinned at the sight of Upton, who came staggering aft to lean on the shattered taffrail and press a wadded handkerchief to his bare head, as if he were staunching a bleeding scalp wound.

"Aye, aye, sir," agreed Upton, submissively. "But I haven't enough men left to lower away the long boat and you've knocked holes through the quarter boat, cutter and gig." In voice too low to carry to the schooner, he added, "Anderson, Barlow, Cartwright, Jones, square the main yard lubberly fashion. The rest, take cover under the canvas over the guns, and stand by."

"Back the main tops'l," he ordered then in louder tones.

The four seamen did an artistic job of it.

Seeing the ship thus clumsily hove to and apparently helpless, the Black Bloodhound signed majestically to his helmsman. The schooner forged ahead, on a course that would bring her alongside, abreast the packet's fore channels. Up she glided, with her boarding nettings and rigging crowded with pirates eager to have a look at the rich prize they had once lost but were now retaking.

"Luff!" whispered Upton. Then, as Crispin put the helm hard down, and the ship's head swung to windward, he shouted, "Run out!"

Up sprang both gun crews, throwing the boat sails clear as they rose. A shriek of alarm came from the Scorpion, who was perched high enough in the schooner's weather fore shrouds to look down over the packet's rail and see the suddenly unmasked battery. Before the quickest-witted of his fellow corsairs could make a move, they saw the midships port lids fly up and found themselves staring into the grim muzzles of the grinning carronades.

"Fire!"

Gorged to the lips with langridge, the carronades spat almost a hundredweight of scrap iron into the close-packed pirate throng. Those who

escaped being killed or wounded flinched from their guns without firing a single answering shot.

"Sponge out and load!" roared Essex Jackson. "Lively, lads, and give 'em another dose!"

But it took some little time for even the liveliest and best drilled gun crew to sponge out, reload, prime, run out and point a primitive old-time muzzle-loader. Before they could ram home the second round and bring the pieces to bear, they saw the schooner fill her big square topsail and stand on out of langridge range.

"We could reach her and sink her now, if we only had a couple of solid shot," lamented Jackson.

"There'll be plenty of solid shot aboard in a minute," Upton consoled him. "Run the guns aft and inboard, before—"

Boom!

The pirate's pivot gun, trained aft, sent a round shot crashing through the packet's starboard bulwarks, just forward of the lee fore shrouds. Ripping and splintering, it tore its way diagonally through the galley, with a tremendous clangor of coppers and pans, then knocked two gun ports into one as it passed out through the port rail.

The air was white with jagged splinters, but again, nobody was hit. While the pirates were reloading, the blue-jackets dragged their carronades in abaft the mainmast, where they would be concealed by the quarter-deck awning and more or less protected by the deckhouse, the longboat and cutter stowed on the booms, the wrecked galley and the foc's'le head, against the raking fire which the schooner's Long Tom was now pouring into the ship's bows.

The second ball came aboard over the lee cathead, plowed a splintering furrow the length of the starboard gangway, plunged through the low poop bulkhead and the flimsy cabin partitions to bury itself in the stern-post with an impact that shook the ship.

"All hands below!" ordered Upton. "That means everybody. Lash the wheel, Mr. Crispin. Orders, Mr. Jackson, sir! I'll con the shots and call you topside if the fellows try to lay us aboard again."

Very reluctantly, the prize crew and the Quaker captain went below, leaving Upton to keep the deck alone. His scheme of defense was simple. He knew that the pirates could easily sink the packet with a few thirty-two pound balls

between wind and water. But he felt quite sure that they would do nothing of the kind unless by accident, for if they sank the ship, then where would their plunder be? Sooner or later, unless their firing brought a cruiser, the pirates would make a second attempt to close and board.

In the meanwhile, as Upton told himself, there was really nothing to worry about. The white cloud of powder smoke gave him ample warning of each discharge, and made an excellent background for the big black cannon ball, whose velocity was low enough for him to mark and avoid its line of flight. As a matter of fact, he was forced to do so only once, when a ricochet shot carried away the rest of the steering wheel.

It was the other end of the ship that the pirates kept pounding. They gave a great yell of delight when they saw their next shot hit one of the dummy guns run out through the bow-ports, and send it somersaulting inboard.

"Mistaking the Quakers for the carronades," Upton chuckled. "Gasparilla ought to know better than that, but if he isn't dead he's mighty unpopular with his shipmates right now. They're not likely to take his say-so about our ordnance after their late — Thunderation!"

A different sort of a crash and a spout of water forward told him what manner of hit the following shot had made on the weather bow.

"Below there!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"They've stove us in between wind and water, somewhere about the weather breast hooks. Get in the forehold and plug the hole before it swamps us."

"Very good, sir."

Five minutes or so later the master's mate shouted his report up the after hatchway.

"We've shipped a dollop o' water, but we've got the hole plugged now, sir. What's that, sir?" he added, as a high-pitched howl from the schooner carried even to the 'tween-decks of the *Brotherly Love*.

"They've dismounted the second one of our Quaker guns, and I guess the benighted scalawags think they've put us out of action. They're coming about. They're heading our way. Yes, it looks as if they were going to clap us aboard on the lee bow."

"Hadn't we better be running the carronades to the bow ports, sir?"

"Absolutely not, Mr. Jackson. In the first

place, there aren't any bow ports left; in the second, unless the Black Bloodhound is a bigger fool than I take him for, he's going to sweep our foc's'le head with a broadside of grape and canister before he boards."

"Then for the Lord's sake, Cap'n Upton, quit the poop and take cover abaft the deckhouse afore he cuts loose," implored Essex Jackson.

"Your advice is sound and I'll bear it in mind," sang Upton cheerily.

The anxious listeners below presently heard him hit the deck with both feet, as if he had jumped down from the break of the poop. Then came the rippling thunder of a broadside right under their bows, and the whistling scream of a myriad grapeshot sweeping the deck and tearing through the rigging.

"To the guns!" shouted Upton.

They bounded on deck and rushed to the carronades. There they found Upton, uninjured and busy casting loose Number One. Six seamen helped him run the piece into the starboard gangway and train it forward. It was already loaded, primed and depressed to the lowest possible elevation. There were no ring bolts to which the preventer tackles could be secured, nor

time to secure them if there had been any. Already a grinding shock and the loom of the *Black Bloodhound's* graceful top-hamper above the smoke cloud forward warned them that the pirate craft had clapped them board and board.

"Musketeers away!"

The sailors snatched up their flintlocks and threw themselves prone on the deck, six at the head of each gangway. Behind each little firing line was a carronade, with an officer standing well clear of the unsecured carriage, taut lock-string in hand.

Out of the powder smoke masking the shot-shattered foc's'le head came the howl of the charging wolf pack. The prone men felt the deck tremble beneath them with the thud and pound of the onrushing feet. Dim forms showed through the smoke fog — the two leaders, with a solid mass of boarders following each along one of the gangways. José Gasparilla led the way on the starboard side, Big Congo to port. Each, as he sprang clear of the smoke and saw the death trap awaiting him, stopped short with an almost comic expression of horror and dismay.

"Fire!"

Upton pulled the lock string as he gave the word. He heard the rolling volley of the musketeers and the deeper roar of Jackson's carronade, followed by a tremendous crash of shattering wood, as the unsecured gun recoiled into the poop bulkhead.

But his own piece had missed fire. The heavy gunlock required an extra thick flint; the common musket flint they had been forced to use had fallen out before it could strike the pan. As fast as he could, the lieutenant drew out his boarding pistol. But even as he cocked it, he saw Gasparilla throw himself flat on the deck, and heard him cry a warning to those behind him to do the same. Those who obeyed were wise, for a second later the flash of Upton's pistol lit the priming of the carronade.

The canvas-wrapped load of langridge hit the deck just forward of the prudently prostrate Gasparilla. Bursting, it hurled its rebounding contents in a cone of dispersal that carried mutilation or death to all who were still standing erect in the starboard gangway.

As the missiles flew, they made no such discordant screaming of ragged metal as had sung the treble to the deep bass of the first broadside.

Instead, the air was filled with a strange, clear ringing, wherever one of the bits of langridge struck anything hard.

"Broken glass!" cried the scandalized José Gasparilla. "The dirty Yankee pigs! On, comrades, and cut the swines' throats for this!"

"Out cutlasses!" rang the answering command. "Repel boarders!"

Sword in hand, Upton hurdled the line of his men as they were rising and dashed forward at their head. In two strides he encountered Gasparilla.

"I thought you were a gentleman," sneered the pirate, hacking at Upton's scalp. "Shooting broken glass! What a barbarity!"

"Never did such a thing in my life, I assure you," answered Upton.

"Liar!" screamed José Gasparilla. "That for thee!"

He made his favorite feint and cut — the celebrated Stroke of Gasparilla. It consisted of a tremendous downward slash, as if to split his opponent's skull. Seeing this coming, the opponent would instinctively guard against it by holding his own blade horizontally above his head. Then Gasparilla would swerve his cut-

lass in midstroke, round the other's point and deep into the side of his neck.

But Upton dropped his own point and raised his hilt in time, so that the cutlass blade ran up the sharply sloping smallsword and glanced off, edge to the rear, at arm's length over its owner's head. Before the bewildered Gasparilla could reverse his weapon and bring it down, Upton shortened his arm and drove his point through the pirate's breast.

Dismayed by their leader's fall, the corsairs who had been pressing aft behind Gasparilla began to retreat rapidly toward the bows. Upton and his six men followed them hard and drove them nearly to the foremast. There the pirates rallied as they saw how few were opposed to them and surged back, twenty or twenty-five strong, led by the Black Bloodhound.

He and Upton crossed swords and fought together in the center of the opposing ranks. Though heavily outnumbered, the navy men could not be outflanked, for, standing shoulder to shoulder, they filled the width of the gangway from the lee rail to the longboat housed on the booms. As long as their single rank remained

unbroken, they could force their foemen to meet them face to face with the cold steel.

On both sides, the firearms had been emptied, leaving the issue to point and edge. Cutlass and hanger clashed and rang, the bayonet crossed with the boarding pike. Two of Upton's sailors, an ex-marine and a former infantryman, stuck to the soldier's weapon. The other four had drawn their cutlasses but apparently forgotten all the drill and instruction they had ever had in the use of the blade. Stop thrusts, parries, feints and all the rest of the science Jackson had tried to teach them were were simply ignored. Slashing and hacking, they beat down their opponents' guards by sheer brute strength of wrist and arm, then cut them down through the shoulder or split their skulls like kindling.

Only the pirate captain and the naval lieutenant were fighting by the book. As soon as their blades engaged, Upton recognized the touch of a master swordsman — the master, moreover, of an unfamiliar school. Strange, subtle feints and delusive ripostes, such as he had never before encountered, bewildered and deceived him. Time and again the Black

Bloodhound's point slipped past Upton's guard, darting straight for his lungs or throat.

Yet each time there was a certain hesitancy and delay, a certain heaviness in handling, that gave the hard-pressed Upton just the splinter of a second he needed to save himself. Something was wrong with his opponent's brilliant fence; something that hampered his wrist and spoiled his fingering.

A parry in prime, that brought the pirate's hilt and black-gloved hand directly before Upton's eyes, told him the reason.

"It's the glove!" he realized. "Nobody'd ever fence with skin-tight dress gloves on. But he always wears 'em in action — part of his pose and disguise. Not used to fighting in 'em, either. Lets his crew do the fighting, as a rule; then he does the cold-blooded killing and torturing. The slimy-souled beast!"

Hot with anger, Upton made a lunge that was deftly turned aside. Back he leaped to avoid the pirate's riposte. His foot came down on a spent grapeshot, one of hundreds that strewed the deck, flew out from under him and threw him sprawling and helpless on his back.

Jim Smiley, turning to defend his officer, fell

beside him with a pike thrust through the thigh. On the other side, old Barbary Jones was too busy beating down a foeman's guard to realize what was happening. The Black Bloodhound stood over Upton silently gloating down at him with eyes that burned like balls of black fire behind the slits of his vizard. His point was lowered, his elbow half raised for the downward thrust that would nail the prostrate Upton to the deck.

Then the corsair's arms were suddenly pinned to his sides by a mightier pair of arms that gripped and lifted him like a little child. Some one was holding him breast to breast, with the lowered sword wedged useless between their bodies. The Black Bloodhound threw back his head to see who it was that dared to treat him so. His black-masked face looked angrily up into a far more hideous mask of his own making — the face of Captain Crispin.

"Friend," said the Quaker, "thee had better come with me."

The Black Bloodhound, the man of silence and mystery, opened his mouth and spoke. But it was no coherent human speech that burst from his throat. It was like the scream of a child

awaking from a nightmare, a scream surcharged with all the terror and agony of all his victims, a scream that silenced and paralyzed the fight.

All looked to see what had happened. The sight of Crispin's Satanic face grinning at them above their captain's writhing form froze every pirate's heart with an icy blast of superstitious fear.

"*El Diablo!*" they wailed. "The Evil One has come for the Black Bloodhound!"

Ignoring their outcries as he had ignored their weapons, the Quaker turned on his heel and strode aft, carrying the struggling, shrieking wretch with him, until the corner of the deck house hid them both from view.

There was no pursuit or attempt at rescue. Upton had sprung to his feet and was waving his men on.

"Hurrah for Captain Crispin!" he shouted.

"Hooray for Johnny Scarface!" answered an echoing war cry from the weather gangway. Round the bows of the longboat charged Essex Jackson at the head of the larboard watch. They had cleared their side of the ship and were ready to bear a hand with the other. Their seven red cutlasses slashed into the flank of the

boarding party, at the same time that Upton's starbowlines hit them in front.

Before this double attack, the already demoralized pirates broke and fled. Back they swarmed over the wreck of the foc's'le head, with the bluejackets close at their heels. Nobody lingered to put up anything like a rear-guard fight. Instead, the first few corsairs to regain the schooner's deck turned round and began to cut away the grapnels that bound them to the ship.

For this piece of selfishness, they were promptly cut down or trampled on by the rest of their shipmates tumbling in a mass down over the lee bow of the *Brotherly Love*. These in their turn were jumped on, hit over the head, jabbed in the back and driven away from the rail by the hotly pursuing man-o'-warsmen.

"Keep after 'em!" exulted Upton. "We've got 'em on the run!"

Deprived of their leader, the savage pack broke into a scattering scurry of beaten curs. Each thought only of saving his own hide. The Scorpion was the first to seek shelter below. The rest ran after him, or else flung down their weapons and begged for quarter.

The few that surrendered were made to clap on the hatches to secure those that were skulking below. They were battering down the main hatch, when the sound of a distant cannon shot drew all eyes to the westward.

A frigate was coming about the point round which the pirate craft had appeared at moonset. Under a towering press of sail, with stunsails set, she was coming at a wonderful pace for a heavy cruiser in so light a breeze. Upton would have recognized her by her rig without the White Ensign flying at her peak.

"Here comes the *Flash*," he said. "She must have heard the firing, but how came she back so soon?"

"She's firing on us!" growled Essex Jackson, as the frigate's bow chaser spoke again.

"Because we're still flying the black flag. Fetch the boat's ensign, quick, before our friends do us a mischief."

A generous cheer came from the disappointed crew of the King's ship, when they saw the skull and crossbones flutter down and the Stars and Stripes go up to the gaff of the *Black Bloodhound*.

CHAPTER XVII: *Unmasked*

"CONGRATULATIONS!" said Lieutenant Brown, R. N., as he came aboard the *Brotherly Love.* "But, good heavens, your ship is a floating shambles! Shall I ask Sir Maurice Fitz-Maurice to send over our doctor, Mr. Upton?"

"He'd be mighty welcome," admitted the American officer, who had come to the gangway carrying the remnants of a white ruffled shirt which he had been tearing up into bandages while he hurried from one wounded man to the next.

"So I see," nodded Brown, with another glance along the horror-strewn deck. "Cox'n!" he shouted from the gangway.

"Sir?"

"Return to the frigate and inform the captain that there are at least thirty wounded men here, in urgent need of the surgeon's care."

Back sped the *Flash's* cutter, to return with

the frigate's entire medical staff, who went swiftly and competently into action.

"By the way," asked Brown, "did you take the Black Bloodhound dead or alive?"

"Alive and unwounded. He's somewhere aft, in safe custody. I've been too busy finishing the fight and then looking after the wounded to bother about him."

"Quite so," approved the Englishman. "Confoundedly cool of the fellow, I must say, to have attacked you when he must have known we were close at hand. We stuck to his wake all yesterday and last night, until the clever rascal led us into that nasty three-cornered tangle of reefs off Coralillo. He slipped out through the small end of the funnel by a channel too shoal for us to follow.

"Back he nipped to the eastward again, leaving us caught in a regular *cul-de-sac*. There was no room for us to come about, without hitting a coral bank. We had to kedge out, stern foremost — please don't tell Sir Maurice I told you! As soon as possible, we put about and resumed the chase. But we'd given the fellow time enough to change his paint and almost to turn the trick."

"Look here," demanded Upton with a puzzled frown. "Let's get this business straightened out. When you left Havana, so they told me there, you were following Don Patricio Dugan."

"We were."

"And is he the man who gave you the slip off Coralillo?"

"Why, of course."

"And your belief is that between there and here, Dugan turned himself into the Black Bloodhound?"

"Absolutely," declared Brown. "It stands to reason."

"Well, I haven't had time to unmask the man yet," Upton replied. "But I have unmasked the schooner. Just step forward and take a look at her larboard plank-sheer."

He pointed down over the lee bow at the schooner still moored athwart the ship's bows. The dead black paint of her topsides and the blood-red sills and lids of her midships gun ports were streaked and patched with the yellowy-white of pitch pine, where the sharp-cornered langridge had gouged deep scratches in the wooden wales.

"Does that look like fresh paint?" demanded Upton. "Can you see any traces of white or green beneath the black and red?"

"Not from here, certainly."

"Let's go aboard, then."

A very brief inspection of the gashes in the schooner's side proved that her present coat was at least three months old, and no sign of any earlier coat of a different color could be found beneath it.

"It looks as if I owed you a month's pay," admitted Brown. "Certainly this can't be the *Isla Esmeralda.* But then what can have become of Dugan and his gunboat?"

"Well, I'd hazard a guess that our Irish friend resented your following him, and that's why he led you into that blind alley off Coralillo. While you were kedging yourselves out, he was probably warping into a convenient little cove I know of, just round the corner of the coast line to the eastward. Then after you'd put back and sailed on past him and out of sight, Dugan could have popped out again and resumed his original course for Guardiana Bay.

"He'd been told by one of the Governor General's spies that the Black Bloodhound

would be careening his schooner down there, and was acting on the tip. When you crowded along in his wake like that, he would naturally suppose you were trying to steal his glory — and you know how Dugan loves the English. It's a downright shame he missed this fight.

"Now let's go back to the *Brotherly Love* and unmask the Black Bloodhound."

They were walking aft for this purpose when they found the starboard gangway blocked by a stretcher party, who were removing a frightfully mutilated wretch under the direct supervision of the *Flash's* doctor.

"Just a minute, if you please, sir," said the British medical officer, taking some round flat objects from his breeches pocket and handing them to Upton. "Is this the sort of ammunition you use in the American service?"

"Well, not as a rule," said Upton slowly, as he studied the powder-blackened, blood-stained disks. "You actually took these out of the wounded?"

"I did," declared the doctor. "There's another specimen sticking out of that stanchion at your elbow, sir. The whole place is peppered with them."

Upton took a brief look around, then ran to where José Gasparilla was reclining, propped up against the side of the deckhouse.

"Look, José!" cried the American in Spanish, as he knelt beside the wounded man. "That ringing sound from the langridge we shot at you here on deck — dost thou remember? I do not blame thee for thinking it was broken glass. But instead, it was these!"

"Silver!" coughed the astounded Gasparilla. "By the Keys of St. Peter, silver dollars!"

Leaving the wounded pirate fingering and clinking the battered coins, Upton summoned the master's mate.

"Who's the reckless spendthrift who put up those charges, Mr. Jackson? And where did he get the money?"

"It was that wall-eyed village idiot, Abner Barlow, sir," rumbled Essex Jackson. "He fetched them charges, wrapped in canvas, just before we went into action, sir."

Barlow was promptly sent for. With equal promptness, he admitted the act but denied the responsibility.

"Mr. Jackson told me to do it himself, sir,"

he testified nervously. "The lieutenant had given orders for all hands to collect old iron for langridge, and I axed whether it would be right to use new iron, out of some kegs of hardware I'd noticed stowed under the guns in the forehold. Mr. Jackson, he says, very emphatic, 'Go ahead and make langridge of 'em, whatever they be.' And so I put up two charges of what I found in the first keg, sir."

"Did you give Barlow such an order, Mr. Jackson?" asked Upton.

"Yes, sir," admitted the master's mate. "But I never dreamed, o' course, that them kegs would be full of money, or that anybody could be such a gol-rammed idjit as to use dollars for langridge, sir."

"Well," pronounced the lieutenant thoughtfully, "if Barlow had stopped to save the silver, chances are we'd have lost the ship. Those dollars did the business, and there wasn't any time for hunting up cheaper substitutes. Barlow, you gather up all the spent shots of this kind that you can find and turn 'em over to Mr. Jackson for safe keeping."

"Is this a treasure ship, may I ask?" put in the bewildered Mr. Brown. "Fancy, kegs of

coined silver labeled 'Hardware' and stowed in the hold!"

"To conceal them, of course," said Upton. "It's a common practice for our merchantmen to carry large sums of specie to pay for return cargo, and this the pirates know. When we first fell in with this ship, the Black Bloodhound had ransacked her cabin, hanged the second mate to the cro'jack yard, and was torturing the skipper to make him tell something which he steadfastly refused to reveal. That secret must have been the hiding place of this money."

"Well, the Black Bloodhound's gang know where it is now, by thunder!" said Essex Jackson, smiling grimly down at the dead and wounded pirates. "Paid off, with a bounty!"

This strictly professional and rather brutal joke brought a loud guffaw from both the British officers. But their mirth was abruptly stilled by the sight of Captain Crispin coming forward along the starboard gangway.

"Good Lord, what a fearful face!" murmured Brown in a shocked voice. "Who on earth is this?"

"The former captain of this ship, the man the Black Bloodhound tortured until he left

him a mass of wounds," Upton explained in a voice too low to be overheard by the approaching skipper.

"Captain Crispin," he added, aloud, "I wish to thank you, in the presence of these officers, for saving my life and taking the Black Bloodhound prisoner by your own unarmed strength and dauntless courage. I have never witnessed nor heard of a more generous and gallant action."

"Thee does me too much honor, Friend Upton," protested the Quaker sadly. "I do not deserve thy commendation, for I was prompted not only by a proper desire to save thy life and restrain that misguided man from shedding blood, but also by a sudden and wicked impulse to lay hands upon him and take vengeance for what he had done to me and mine.

"The black thought possessed me, as I carried him aft, of hanging him from that very block on the cro'jack yard where he had hanged my nephew Abner. During the space of time it took me to bear him to the poop, I was in thought and intent no better than a murderer.

"But when I had brought him to that place where Abner had been pinioned and the noose

set about his neck, then and there, as I was looking about me for a rope with which to serve this man as he had served my nephew, I was suddenly stayed by a revelation of the Inner Light.

"'Friend,' I said to him, 'let us stay here and meditate a while.'

"So we remained for a little time, while I continued to hold him tightly, lest he return to the fight or do me an injury with his sword, until of a sudden he shivered and collapsed like a sail from which the wind had been spilled. The life had gone out of his body, and I laid it upon the deck and came away."

"What!" cried Upton. "Is the Black Bloodhound dead?"

He and the other officers ran eagerly to the poop. There they found the Black Bloodhound, his rigid hand still clutching his unfleshed sword, his upturned face still hidden behind its mask. As Upton bent down to remove it, his eyes met those of the dead man, wide open and staring up at him through the narrow openings of the vizard with unutterable loathing and abject fear.

"Died of the horrors," thought Upton while

he was feeling for the knot of the mask string. "And no wonder!"

Unable to find the knot, he snapped the string and removed the mask, revealing the pallid features of Don Pablo Estrada!

CHAPTER XVIII: *The Imposter*

"DON PABLO!" cried the astonished Upton. "The richest man in Cuba, a gentleman of Spain! Why should he turn pirate?"

"Incredible!" echoed Lieutenant Brown. "But I've seen Don Pablo Estrada, and this is he. But why should he have died like this, without receiving the slightest wound?"

"It must have been an attack of heart disease, brought on by the exertion of the fight and the shock of finding himself being carried off by the — er — by one of his former victims. I remember he had an attack of the same complaint and told me that he was subject to heart trouble, when we were in bathing together at his place at Miramar, only three days ago," said Upton. "Well, what is it, Mr. Jackson?"

The master's mate had started, as if struck by a sudden thought, then stepped forward and saluted.

"Beggin' the lieutenant's pardon, sir," he

rasped, with an ominously savage undertone beneath the formal phrase, "wasn't it this same Don Pablo Estrada that the lieutenant was visitin' just afore we sailed?"

"It was," agreed Upton.

"And wasn't it by his request that we took aboard them four refugees off Miramar Lagoon? Didn't this here Don Pablo specially recommend that black heathen Ciro el Zambo as a cook, sir? Then it wasn't no crazy mistake of a crazy sea cook what thought he'd seen the devil. It was all a plot of the Black Bloodhound's to kill us off and save himself the trouble of fightin' when he clapped us aboard this mornin', sir."

"Merciful heavens!" faltered Upton, turning pale as the dead man. "But that implies —"

"How about cross-questionin' the other refugees, sir?" persisted Essex Jackson. "Hadn't we better fetch up them three women from the cable tier and find out what they knows?"

An indignant negative rose to Upton's lips at the revolting thought of having Inés "fetched up" and cross-examined like a suspected criminal before rough old Essex Jackson and these cynical Englishmen. Upton was in command

and could quash the proposed investigation with a shake of his head.

But a moment's reflection made him realize the futility of thus shutting his eyes to the facts. He was under orders to rejoin the *Constellation* at Kingston, where Jackson would be sure to repeat his suspicions to Captain Ezra T. Doughty. And if in the meanwhile Upton were to set the ladies ashore in Jamaica and beyond the reach of the United States Navy, then they would fall into the hands of the Crown lawyers, as soon as Sir Maurice FitzMaurice should inform the island authorities of what his lieutenant and his surgeon had overheard on the poop of the *Brotherly Love.* Any attempt on Upton's part to spare the woman he loved would only react in her disfavor. Faced with this fact, he did not flinch.

"Arrest the refugees, Mr. Jackson," he ordered quietly, "and have them brought up from the cable tier. But remember, sir, that they are women. Treat them with all the deference due their sex. Blindfold their eyes, to spare them the sight of this fearful carnage, and bring them to — to —"

He hesitated, unable to think for the moment

of any fit and decent place. The deck was a reeking slaughter pen, the half-wrecked cabin a crowded surgery.

"If I might make a suggestion," put in Lieutenant Brown, "why not go aboard the schooner? She is quite intact and her late commander would be just the sort to have very snug quarters aft."

"Thank you, sir, that's a first-rate idea. Bring the refugees to the cabin of the prize, Mr. Jackson. Would you like to be present at the inquiry, Mr. Brown?"

"Very much indeed," said the Englishman. "Fact is, Sir Maurice charged me particularly to make sure of the Black Bloodhound's identity. I can't believe even now that this was Don Pablo Estrada."

"I can believe it," responded Upton, "but I can't understand it. I've a notion to have the body brought over with us to the schooner — that is, if you're through with it for the present, Doctor."

"Quite," said the English surgeon, who had been making a cursory examination of the corpse. "Subject to an autopsy and taking into account what the deceased told you about his

physical condition, I'd say the fellow died of heart failure, brought on by exertion and downright craven fear."

"What about the condition of José Gasparilla — that Spaniard against the side of the deckhouse, yonder, with the stab in his chest? His testimony, if he can be induced to confess, will be of the highest importance."

"Then you'd better set about obtaining it at once, sir," said the doctor. "The top of his left lung is pierced, and I've never known any one to recover from a wound like that in this beastly part of the world."

The surgeon hurried below to the glut of work awaiting him in the packet's cabin. Jackson had already gone forward to the cable tier. Upton detailed two seamen to carry the body of the Black Bloodhound to the cabin of the schooner, then went forward with Brown to where Gasparilla was still studying the three silver dollars that had been shot at him out of the carronade.

"A thousand pardons," he coughed as Upton bent over him, "for supposing — broken glass."

He looked up with an apologetic smile that

changed to scornful hatred as the two sailors shuffled by with the corpse of the Black Bloodhound. Gasparilla spat a gobbet of bloody saliva that fell just short of the dead man's face.

"For shame, José!" cried Upton. "The man is dead."

"He ought to be," snarled Gasparilla, spewing up a vomit of foul names. "When I meet him in hell, next tide, I'll —"

He choked on the threat.

"Listen, José. Will you tell —?"

"Everything," volunteered Gasparilla. "For the sake of my —"

Here he choked again.

"*Aguardiente,*" he begged. "And take me out of this cursed sun."

"Put down that corpse and pick up this wounded man," Upton ordered the two sailors. "Bring him with us."

The officers helped the seamen ease Gasparilla down over the bows to the schooner's deck and aft to the cabin. This was luxuriously furnished to suit the taste of an effeminate voluptuary. The sailors laid Gasparilla on a blue velvet sofa, and started back for the dead man. Upton was pouring out a drink of brandy for Gasparilla, and

Brown was arranging the writing materials he had found in the drawer of the cabin table, when they heard light and heavy footsteps coming together down the companionway.

In the narrow doorway, which he completely filled, appeared Essex Jackson. He saluted with a dignity which was not in the least shaken by the long, red scratches furrowing both his cheeks.

"Sir, I have to report that the firin' above their heads and the bad air below appears to have sent the old lady into a swoon and that cross-eyed wench Pepita into screamin' hysterics. I have been obliged to tie her up and have taken the liberty of leavin' both her and the old lady where they be until the doctor has time to attend to 'em."

"Quite right, Mr. Jackson," approved Upton in a voice that he tried his best to keep officially cool and steady. He and Brown took their places behind the table, with pens, ink and paper before them.

"And the young lady?"

"Here she be, sir."

Both officers rose instinctively to their feet as Inés entered. She was still wearing the white

evening gown, now woefully crumpled and blackened by the muddy hempen cables. Her golden hair, freed from its ivory combs, flowed in a rippling torrent down over her shoulders to her waist. The white mantilla had been tightly folded and tied around her head, so that it not only covered her eyes but almost completely masked her face.

"Bring the lady a chair and remove the blindfold," directed Upton.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Lieutenant Brown, R. N., as soon as the mantilla was taken away. "Why, it's Esa Rubia!"

"What, do you know the lady?" demanded Upton.

"Ra-ther!" chuckled the Englishman. "We used to call her the Queen of Cadiz."

"Sir!" interrupted Upton angrily. "You are utterly mistaken. This lady is —"

"*Mi esposa,*" croaked the half-strangled voice of Gasparilla. "My wife!"

The young woman had been staring about her in bewilderment and fear, with eyes that were dazzled and blinded, after the hours of darkness in the cable tier, by the brilliant sunlight pouring in through the cabin windows. Now,

at the sound of Gasparilla's voice, she rushed to him with a cry of agony.

"José! They have killed thee, oh, my beloved! José! José!"

Throwing herself on her knees beside the couch, she buried her face in Gasparilla's breast, clasping him in her arms and weeping.

"Leave her alone, Mr. Jackson," Upton said sharply, as the master's mate would have dragged her back to the place of trial. A minute or so later, he signed to the two seamen who were bringing in the body of the Black Bloodhound to place it upon the transom and withdraw.

These things he did mechanically, with half his brain, while the other kept repeating numbly, over and over again, that Inés, the beautiful Inés, was not his but the wife of José Gasparilla. Nerving himself to the bitter task, he dipped the quill in the ink and set down the place, date and accusation in proper form.

He was about to summon the accused, when of her own accord she sprang up and confronted the three officers like an angry lioness. In the pitiless morning light, she looked far older than at the romantic hour of moonrise.

"A priest! A doctor!" she cried imperiously. "Go, fetch both here. Would you slay him, body and soul?"

"There is no priest to be had, I fear, Señora," Upton told her, with a questioning look at Brown, who shook his head.

"Our chaplain's Church of England," he said regretfully, "and you've heard what the surgeon said."

"I want neither sawbones nor shaveling," spoke Gasparilla. "I die as I have lived, without faith or fear. But I will tell you everything if you will only let my wife go free and unharmed. What have you against her, *Teniente?*"

"This," answered Upton, translating the formal phrases in which Señora Gasparilla, alias Inés de Guevara, alias Esa Rubia, was accused of complicity in a plot to kill the officers and prize crew of the *Brotherly Love* by means of introducing or causing to be introduced into the coffee intended for their consumption a deadly poison.

At the word *veneno,* both husband and wife burst into loud denials. Gasparilla cried "No! No!" until he choked, then wagged his fore-

finger back and forth in front of his face, as a Spaniard does instead of shaking his head.

"A deadly poison? No!" cried the Spanish woman. "This morning, Ciro el Zambo was to have stirred in your coffee a certain drug which would have sent you and all your men into a heavy sleep."

"From which we would never have wakened in this world."

"But no!" she repeated. "You would have wakened some ten or twelve hours later, to find yourselves prisoners in our hands. We were not so vile as to poison the crew and captain who had rescued José, your enemy, from the sharks. And we needed hostages to exchange for our comrades who had been captured by your navy.

"I refused to play the part of Inés de Guevara, until the Black Bloodhound swore on the cross that the drug was no poison, such as he had at first proposed, but a harmless sleeping potion. Let it be fetched and tested on my own body!"

"Compose yourself, madam. The test will be made in no such fashion but in the labora-

tory," answered Upton. "By the way, Mr. Jackson, you'd better go to the galley and secure that dead monkey, the poison sack and the other circumstantial evidence."

Jackson left, and Upton continued.

"I should have warned you, as I do now, that whatever you say will be taken down and may be used as evidence against you."

"I care not what you may do to me," she cried with vehemence. "If only you will spare José. Can't you see that it is torture for him to speak? Let him die in peace, and I will confess all.

"I was the famous, the notorious Esa Rubia, the Fair One, to whom all Cadiz once paid homage and tribute. But now I have done with love and lying and all other sins. I have followed the path of evil even to the gates of hell, but from this hour I give myself up to prayer and penance. If I am spared the prison and the gallows I will renounce the world and take the veil."

"When did you become acquainted with the late Don Pablo Estrada?" asked Upton, in the course of the inquiry.

"In 1821."

"Where?"

"At sea, aboard the ill-fated packet *San Jorge.*"

"How did you happen to be fellow passengers?"

"Because Don Pablo was the richest and the simplest-minded youth who ever sailed from Spain," she answered frankly. "Therefore the cleverest thieves of Cadiz took passage on the same ship, to pluck him on the voyage. But we found ourselves forestalled by a cleverer thief from Salamanca, where Don Pablo had been a student at the university.

"There he had formed the acquaintance of one Fernando Morales, an actor of ill repute and evil ways, whom the simple-witted Don Pablo vastly admired for his wit and knowledge of the world. As soon as he was informed that he had fallen heir to the great Estrada estates in Cuba, Don Pablo made his friend Morales his secretary.

"Very competently did Morales protect his master against all other thieves. He saw through all our wiles and baffled us utterly. Neither threats nor bribes could induce him to give us the least share in plundering his employer. He wanted it all for himself.

"Never was there a more faithful servant, a truer friend, until the day of battle, when our ship was attacked by the pirate Jean Lafitte. The terror of his name spread panic through our crew. Don Pablo, sword in hand, was trying to rally them when he was killed."

"What's that?" cried Brown and Upton together. "Don Pablo was killed?"

"Then and there," insisted the Spanish woman, "on the deck of the *San Jorge*."

"Who killed him?"

"The man who killed Don Pablo Estrada, the false friend who stabbed his benefactor in the back — that Judas, Fernando Morales."

"Simple enough," growled Brown. "The fellow scragged his master, stole his credentials and took his place."

"But why did the pirates let Morales keep the credentials or anything else?" objected Upton. "Such is not their practise when plundering a prize."

"Because Morales was the first to cry 'Viva Lafitte!'" explained the Spanish woman. "He joined the pirates and helped them take the ship. Instead of being plundered, he was given a share in the plunder. He served Lafitte for

the next six months, afloat and ashore, and was wounded in several actions.

"Then Morales fell to plotting against Lafitte at Isla Galvez. He was found out, imprisoned and would have been hanged but for the coming of the *Enterprise*. We were all taken to New Orleans, where Morales showed his stolen papers to the Spanish consul, who sent him to Cuba to claim and receive the Estrada estates."

"But why didn't the real Don Pablo's family and friends detect the imposter?" asked Brown. "There must have been some difference in their appearance — to say nothing of their knowledge of the country."

"The true Don Pablo's family had all been swept away by the yellow fever," she explained. "He had been a mere child when he was sent to be educated in Spain, and his portrait had never been painted. He had been a pretty boy, and Morales was notably handsome. As for his knowledge of Havana and Miramar, he had learned much by years of companionship with Don Pablo. Morales knew enough to play his part, and he was an actor born."

"But why, when he was once established as

the richest man in Cuba, did Morales take to pirating again?" asked Upton.

"Because we made him," croaked Gasparilla hoarsely from the couch. "I was Lafitte's lieutenant — I won my wife in fair fight at the taking of the *San Jorge*. Followed him up —"

Gasparilla fell silent, while his wife answered further questions.

"In his guarded castle the traitor was safe from direct attack, yet feared it night and day. Most of all did he fear the vengeance of Jean Lafitte. To protect himself, Morales raised a battalion of *mobilizados,* and kept in garrison the Guardias Civiles who were supposed to be hunting down the cattle thieves that infested the countryside.

"We and the few we had brought with us from Isla Galvez were not strong enough to storm Miramar. But we warned Morales that if he failed to pay us our just share, then I would go to the Governor General and reveal the truth. Morales answered that the Governor General with his taxes and the lawyers with their fees for the recovery of the estates had already made him poor.

"We replied that if he were rich he could

pay; if he were poor, he could join us and earn more. So he returned to piracy. From him, we received enough to purchase and arm this schooner and complete her crew. Through him, we found a market for captured cargoes of slaves or merchandise. On the shore of his estate, some three leagues from Miramar, is a tiny, deserted cove where we could dock the schooner.

"Morales would mount his horse and ride alone to a hidden hut in the jungle. There he would assume the dress and mask of the Black Bloodhound, then take the trail to the cove. Our crew never saw his face nor heard his voice. He posed as captain, giving commands by dumb show. But the sailing master and the real commander was my brave José.

"Only once did Morales essay a cruise without him. That was when he captured this ship of yours, only to lose her to your frigate. José had gone to Cape San Antonio, where you foiled his attack on the steamboat and took him prisoner.

"By a friendly boatman in Havana harbor, José sent a guarded message to me at our house in the city. I understood its import and des-

patched a mounted servant to overtake Morales, who was on the road to Miramar, urging him to return at once to Havana and use his great influence with the Governor General to obtain José's release. But when Morales appeared at our house, José was already there.

"My husband told us of the affray between the American seamen and the Customs House officers who had subsequently picked him up while swimming and brought him ashore. We realized that your ship would be promptly seized by the authorities. We knew that once the officials got their greedy hands upon the prize it would be forever lost to us.

"By good fortune Morales had learned from the guard at the city gate of the rumored insurrection. That was sufficient. He went to his town house, assumed his uniform and hastened with loyal zeal to the Palacio. There, as we had expected, he found you under arrest and by his testimony soon obtained your release.

"We sent false information to Don Patricio Dugan, and also to the captain of the English frigate, that the Black Bloodhound's hiding place was at Guardiana Bay. As we had hoped, they sped away together on this false scent.

With both cruisers thus disposed of, José was for attacking and recapturing your ship in honest battle.

"But Morales feared your prowess and laid a subtler plan. The only difficulty was to find some way of inducing you to ship Ciro el Zambo, the *Black Bloodhound's* cook. The coming of Captain Acuna, with an order for the release of his Guardias Civiles from garrison duty, gave to Morales, ever fertile in lies, the chance for appealing to your chivalric sympathy with a romantic tale of helpless ladies fleeing from persecution.

"I consented to take part, with my maid and housekeeper to assist me, because I knew you and your men would put up a stubborn fight, and that by drugging you to sleep we could avoid all risk of battle. But never did I consent to be accomplice to a poisoner! On the Cross I swear it."

"I affirm it," muttered Gasparilla. "We were only fools, who believed Morales. May he — ugh."

A long, tense silence followed, broken only by the scratching of Upton's quill as it hurried over the paper. Very anxiously the others

studied the American's impassive face for a sign, but none could they find.

"Look here," whispered Lieutenant Brown. "In my opinion, they're telling the truth. I — er — knew this lady pretty extensively in Cadiz, and though she'd knife you like a shot, if she thought you needed it, she'd never go in for cold-blooded poisoning. Why not let her end her days in a convent, if she's so inclined and they're willing to take her in? There are convents in Jamaica, I know. Why not just set her ashore at Kingston and leave the rest to me? For the sake of old times at Cadiz, you can count on me to keep my mouth shut — and the doctor's also."

Upton looked at him inscrutably and went on writing.

"We must wait for Jackson," was all he said. "Taking a long time, isn't he?"

The master's mate took a long time indeed to return from his trip to the galley. Upton had finished setting down the last of the testimony and was stacking the sheets of foolscap neatly together when Jackson reappeared at the cabin door.

"Sir," he reported, "the *Dolphin* schooner

is beating up from leeward, and the *Sea Gull* steamer is coming about the point to the east-'ard."

"Good!" said Upton. "Two of our Mosquito Flotilla gunboats, Mr. Brown, which means that I sha'n't have to ask Sir Maurice FitzMaurice for any spare hands to help sail these two craft to Kingston. Oh, by the way, Mr. Jackson, what about those things from the galley?"

"I meant to say, sir, that one of the enemy's round shot—"

"The third one they fired, as I remember," observed Upton, "raked the galley from corner to corner, didn't it?"

"It did, sir, and what it didn't carry away, that last broadside of grape and canister ripped all to pieces. I can't find hide nor hair of that dead monkey nor the sack, nor the tin cup nor the copperful of p'izened coffee. I did find the cook's body — that is to say, most of it. But he was already dead when we laid hands on him this mornin', sir."

"He was," agreed Upton. "But that might have been from an overdose of sleeping potion, as the accused claims. And even admitting that

it was a deadly poison — and I'm inclined to agree with you that it was — then how can we prove it now? And hasn't the would-be poisoner paid the penalty?"

"Meanin' the cook, sir?"

"Not only that poor tool but his master, the Black Bloodhound. Now that they both are dead, have we anything to gain by prosecuting a woman? Don't you agree with me, Mr. Jackson, that it would have been better for all parties concerned if we had never taken those women aboard our ship but had found them here in the schooner where they belong?"

"A durned sight better, sir," agreed Essex Jackson fervidly.

"Then make it so," said Upton.

The Gasparillas, unable to understand what the three officers were saying to each other in English, saw Jackson stare blankly for a moment, then salute, turn on his heel and go stumping up the companionway. Presently he came below again, carrying the bound and gagged Pepita, and followed by two strong seaman, bearing the still unconscious bulk of the older woman.

At a sign and a word from Upton, they took the two women into the nearest stateroom and left them there. The sailors lifted the corpse of the Black Bloodhound and carried it up on deck, to be thrown to the sharks.

The Spanish couple saw the Englishman and the two Americans shaking each other's hands, after the brief fashion of their kind. They saw the English lieutenant and the master's mate go up on deck, leaving Upton alone with his prisoners.

"What does this mean? What are you going to do with us?" asked the woman.

"I am leaving these others in your care, Señora, for the rest of the voyage to Jamaica. There, so I am informed, are convents of your faith. You are free to enter the cloister; you are free to go wherever you will."

"*Caballero!* A true *caballero!*" cried Gasparilla.

The other two said nothing but the customary formula of farewell. But each, as they parted forever, made of that trite valedictory a parting benediction and a prayer.

"*Vaya con Dios!* May you go with God."

END